

Harry Potter is owned by JKR. Damn, only my stuff is mine, the rest is hers.

This will be the only comment on this.

Wish she'd share some money with us starving people. : D

Please leave a review. Comments will be responded to, flames ignored.

Some parts of this story are taken from the books because its critical information. (Hagrid's talking, the prophesy, classroom interaction, and conversations from teachers and students. This is no part in infringing on JKR to make money or any Plagiarism. Its just to set critical information for the story that should stay cannon. I will not list each piece on where its taken.)

Harry Potter

The Heir's Ring

Chapter One

Harry Plans

The late-afternoon sun hung low in the sky as Harry and Hagrid made their way back down Diagon Alley. Harry was thinking of all that had happened. Learning that he was a wizard, and that his parents hadn't died in a car accident, had sent him for a loop. The second thing that had smacked him in the face, was the fact that he had lots of money. He had enough to live every summer in a motel if he wanted to, and not go back to the Dursleys, ever. His stomach rumbled as they reached the wall. Hagrid opened the gate so they could enter the Leaky Cauldron, which was now empty.

"Hagrid, I'm hungry, let's eat here," Harry said as they walked into the tavern room.

Hagrid looked at the watch on his wrist and replied, "We gots time fer a bite to eat before yer train leaves."

They sat down and quickly ordered their meal. As they were eating, Harry continued to think of plans. He watched a man come in and

ask Tom for a room for the night, and he felt his plans locking into place. He also talked about something called the Knights Bus, and had to find out what that was.

"Hagrid, I can get home on my own from here. The tube is just down the street, and the train leaves in an hour. Why don't you head on home and I'll see you at Hogwarts," Harry replied as he set his glass down.

"Are yer sure? Dumbledore would skin me alive if something happened to you," Hagrid asked.

"Yes, I'm sure. I've been to London by myself several times this year, just to do shopping for my family. So you go ahead and get home. That way you don't have to be out real late," Harry said.

"Ok, 'arry. I'll see you on the first. Here's yer ticket," Hagrid replied.

He stood up and set an envelope on the table. Giving Harry a hug, he walked to the fireplace. He threw some powder into the burning fire and stepped inside as he said, "Great Hall, Hogwarts," and vanished.

Harry wiped his mouth and stood up. Going to the counter he said, "Tom, can I get a room for the night?"

Tom had just came in from the kitchen and nodded as he pulled the registry book out, "Sign here, Mr. Potter," Tom said as he handed Harry a self-inking quill.

Harry quickly signed the register, and took the key. Going upstairs, he dumped everything from the trunk, onto the bed. Then he went back downstairs to the bar.

"Hey, Tom, what is the Knight's Bus?"

"We use the Knight's Bus to get where we need to go, when portkeys, floos or apparitions might be harmful to us. You stick your wand out, and the bus will appear. It costs about eleven sickles a ride," Tom replied.

"Thanks, Tom. I'll be back in a while... need to go get something from home," Harry said and dragged his trunk to the door.

"Here, let me help with that," Tom offered and came over and tapped it with his wand, "There, I put a featherlightspell on it. It should last for about three hours."

"Thanks Tom, appreciate it," Harry said as he pulled the door open.

Harry stepped out onto the curb and held out his wand and a flash of smoke and dust, triple-decker, violently purple bus, which had appeared out of thin air. Gold lettering over the windscreen spelled The Knight Bus.

"Welcome to the Knight's Bus, emergency transport for the stranded witch or wizard. Just stick out your wand hand, step on board and we can take you anywhere you want to go. My name is Stan Shunpike, and I will be your conductor this evening."

Harry noticed that Stan Shunpike was only a few years older than himself. He was eighteen or nineteen, at the most, with large and protruding ears and a few pimples.

Hello, lad, where's your family?"Stan asked as he dropped his professional manner.

"In their rooms. I need to go to #4 Privet Drive, Surry," Harry said with an annoyed voice.

"Woss your name?" Stan persisted.

Harry quickly thought of a name and replied, "Jason Redcloud. Now, can we go?"

"Strange name, but ok. That'll be eleven Sickles," said Stan, "but for thirteen you get 'ot chocolate. For fifteen you get a 'ot-water bottle an' a toofbrush, in the colour of your choice."

Harry reached into his pocket, pulled out his moneybag, and shoved some silver into Stan's hand. Harry pulled his empty trunk up the steps of the bus.

There were no seats. Instead, half-a-dozen brass bedsteads stood beside the curtained windows. Candles were burning in brackets beside each bed, illuminating the wood-paneled walls.

A tiny wizard in a nightcap at the rear of the bus muttered, "Not now, thanks, I'm pickling some slugs," and rolled over in his sleep.

"You 'ave this one," Stan whispered, shoving Harry's trunk under the bed right behind the driver, who was sitting in an armchair in front of the steering wheel. "This is our driver, Ernie Prang. This is Jason Redcloud, Ern."

Ernie Prang, an elderly wizard wearing very thick glasses, nodded to Harry, who sat on his bed.

"Take 'er away, Ern," said Stan, sitting down in the armchair next to Ernie's.

There was another tremendous BANG, and next moment Harry found himself flat on his bed, thrown backwards by the speed of the Knight's Bus. Pulling himself up, Harry stared out of the dark window and saw that they were now bowling along a completely different street. Stan was watching Harry's stunned face with great enjoyment.

"This is where we was before you flagged us down," he said. "Where are we, Ern? Somewhere in Scotland?"

"Ar," said Ernie.

"Hey, Stan, how come the Muggles don't hear the bus?" Harry asked as he watched them fly past two police cars.

"Them!" said Stan contemptuously. "Don' listen properly, do they? Don' look properly either. Never notice nuffink, they don'."

"Jason, get ready," said Ern. 'We'll be in Surry in a minute.'

With a lurch the bus came to a stop in front of #4 Privet Drive. Harry stood up and dragged his trunk to the door, as Stan opened it.

"I'll call you in about half an hour," Harry replied as he went down the stairs and up to the front door.

Harry grabbed the emergency keys from under the rock, and went inside. Going to his cupboard, he opened the door and slipped inside. Grabbing the stacks of schoolbooks he had in the back, he

shoved them out the door, along with everything else he owned. There wasn't much, just a worn blanket with a crest on one end, and a few broken toys he has snatched from Dudley. Putting everything into the open trunk, he pulled the trunk downstairs to the basement, and over to the back corner. He had more fantasy and Sci-Fi books hidden under some of Dudley's schoolbooks, which Dudley had never opened. They went into the trunk, as well as some paper and pencils that had found their way into another box, meant for school art.

Harry shut the trunk, dragged it back upstairs, and to the front door. He was about to leave, when he remembered something he has seen up in the attic. Running upstairs, he went to his aunt's bedroom, and grabbed her chair. Dragging it into the hallway, he reached up and pulled the cord down that lowered the stairs.

Running up the stairs, he went to the far back corner, and pulled a box off the stack of boxes. Looking at the box, he saw it had his mother's name on it. Going downstairs, he pushed the stairs back up, and put the chair back in the bedroom.

Once back downstairs, he dropped the shoebox into the trunk, and then grabbed a paper and pen to write a note.

Dear Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia

I am staying with Hagrid until we go to school, so don't worry about me. I'll see you next summer. If you want me to, I'll try and find someone to stay with next summer... if you want me to. I will send you a letter on the third with my owl. If you agree to this, then I will try very hard to find someone to stay with, please let me know.

Harry

Leaving the note on the table, Harry grabbed his trunk and walked out the front door. Harry raised his wand, and with a bang, the bus was back. He climbed onboard and paid the eleven Sickles. Harry sat down and Ernie put the bus in gear, he saw his uncle's car coming towards them.

Ten minutes later the bus came to a stop and Harry dragged his trunk off the bus and up the stairs to his room, where he set it down.

Harry quickly removed everything from the bed, and repacked the trunk. Then he went into the bathroom, where he changed for bed.

Harry sat on bed with box he had taken from Aunt Petunia's attic. Using his potion knife, he cut the masking tape and opened it. Inside, were stacks of letters. On top was a letter written in green ink, which said Petunia on it.

Harry spent the next hour reading the letters. The first letter was written by Headmaster Dumbledore. It explained about the blood wards, and how they would protect her family from the death eaters. He also said that they had custody of Harry, and not to spoil him. Dumbledore even went so far as to tell them to be very strict with him, so he would be humbled when he came to Hogwarts. The letter really pissed him off, because all the abuse he'd suffered over the last ten years was Dumbledore's fault.

"Son of a bitch! Why you little fucker!" Harry snapped out as he read the letter again. "You think you're going to have me humble, and bow down to you, Headmaster? You're out of your fucking mind!"

Setting the letter down, he leaned back on his bed and wondered what he was going to do.

Looking over at his owl, Hedwig, he said, "Well, Hedwig, he may think I will be kowtowing to him, but I won't. For right now, though, he can think it."

Hedwig hooted at him, and then tucked his head backwards and went to sleep.

"Good idea," Harry said.

He put all the letters back in the box and dropped it on the floor. Pulling the blanket over himself, he lay down and went to sleep.

ooOoOoo

The next morning, Harry was up at dawn. Ordering a breakfast from Tom, he sat at the table eating and reading the rest of the letters. His mom's first letter was about going to Hogwarts and how to get on the train. She said she had to walk between the barriers of

platform 9 and 10 and into the wall. Staying near platform 10 because 9 and $\frac{3}{4}$ was near platform 10 not platform 9.

"Hey, Hedwig, it's a good thing for Mum's letter, because this letter tells me something Hagrid didn't tell me. I'm sure I wouldn't have found it, and I would probably be ambushed by Dumbleshits lackeys," Harry spouted off as he set the letter to the side, and started flipping through them. Seeing the date on the last letter, he picked it up and opened it.

Dearest Petunia,

I write this with a heavy heart. We have been targeted by Lord Voldemort, himself. We're going into hiding and I don't know when or if I'll see you again. We're hiding under a charm called the Fidelius Charm. The charm is immensely complex, involving the magical concealment of a secret inside a single, living soul. The information is hidden inside the chosen person, or Secret-Keeper, and is henceforth impossible to find without the Secret-Keeper's willingness to divulge it. We have chosen Peter Pettigrew instead of Sirius Black as our secret-keeper. The reason is that we know that Sirius would be the logical target. While Sirius keeps the death eaters busy, we should be safe under Peter.

If something happens to us, I hope you will let Dudley and Harry be friends, one day. Harry should be safe with his godfather, Sirius, or one of the others chosen in our will. I will say, now, that we forbid Harry to be placed with your family. This is due to Vernon's temper. I'm sorry that it has to happen, because of this. His fear of our ways has spread to you. I remember when you begged Dumbledore to come to Hogwarts to learn, and how you were so angry you couldn't.

How I wished you could come, as smart as you are. You would have been with me in Ravenclaw. We would have had so much fun together.

Now back to why I wrote you. If we have died, and Voldemort is still around, get out of England. Have Vernon talk with his boss. He will transfer Vernon to another country. Please, you're the last of the Evan's, and we must survive. I have also enclosed a copy of our will. To open it, dab a drop of blood on it. Only our blood can open it. After you read it, and agree to the terms, sign it and it will disappear

to reappear with our bank manager who will have your share deposited in your account.

Your loving sister,

Lills

"Wow!" Harry said as he closed the letter and put it in the box. Picking up the will that had been folded inside the letter, he flipped it over and looked at the wax seal, with an image pressed in it. Using his finger, he tried to force it open, but it wouldn't. Harry looked at the letter and then remembered. He grabbed the knife from the table.

Pricking his finger, he squeezed a drop of his blood onto the seal, and smeared it around. The seal smoldered and vanished, as he sucked on his finger.

Last Will and Testament of James Charlus Potter and Lily Rose Potter (nee Evans).

We the undersigned, (James and Lily Potter) declare this is our final will, forsaking all others written before this date. Before we get to the grisly details, we wish to let you know why we have combined our wills. We are being hunted by the terrorist called Lord Voldemort. We have gone into hiding under the Fidelius Charm. We have chosen Peter Pettigrew, instead of Sirius Black, as our Secret-Keeper. The reason is that we know that Sirius would be the logical target. While Sirius keeps the death eaters busy, we should be safe under Peter's watch. However, if we're found and killed, we have provided for our son.

To our good friend Sirius Black we leave one million Galleons, and the cottage near Newcastle.

To our good friend Remus Lupin we leave one million Galleons and orders to buy a new wardrobe. We also leave him the cottage near Dover.

To our good friend Peter Pettigrew, we leave one million Galleons and the cottage in France near Paris

To Dumbledore, we leave to you and to the Order of the Phoenix, one million Galleons for the war effort.

To Petunia Dursley and family, we leave you one million pounds in the bank of London. You are to use this money to get the hell out of England, if Voldemort is still alive after our death. Petunia, you're the last of the Evans, you must carry our bloodline out of the country, to survive.

The rest of our estate, we leave to our son, who shall be given our will when he reaches eleven years of age. Inside the main vault, is a chest with all of our journals. Also in this chest, are several letters to our son. At fourteen, Harry will be emancipated and given the Head of the House ring. He will then take his active role in the government. We have also set up a trust fund for Harry, starting at age one. We deposited ten thousand galleons in the vault. Every year until his majority, another ten thousand will be added. Therefore, if it's not touched by the time he's eleven, he will have over one hundred thousand galleons in the account, not including the accrued interest, for his school years.

As to guardianship of Harry James Potter, the following shall be the order of his guardians.

Sirius Orion Black: a good friend and godfather to Harry

Remus Lupin: a good friend

Alice and Frank Longbottom: good friends, Alice is Harry's godmother

Amelia Susan Bones: a good friend and coworker

Frank Evens of New York City: a cousin of Lilly's

The Weasleys: a good family

Aaron and Shana Greengrass: business associates to the Potter family, and good friends of the Potters

Any other house that fought on the side of the light

The guardian of Harry will receive one thousand Galleons a month for his care, and another one hundred Galleons for clothing and toys for Harry as he grows.

At no time is Albus Dumbledore is to have magical guardianship of Harry, nor is Harry to go to my sister and brother in law. See above, as to why. With Harry with them, it makes them a target.

Signed this day

October the 1st 1981

James Charlus Potter

Lily Rose Potter (nee Evens).

Witness

Sirius Orion Black

Remus Lupin

Frank Longbottom

Alice Longbottom

Counter signed by the Chairman of the London Branch of the Gringotts Bank:

Ragnok

Harry sat there, fuming. He couldn't understand why his parents' will hadn't been followed, but he was determined to find out why.

"Hedwig, I've been buggared, and I don't know why. But we're going to find out why, at the bank, or I hope so," he said.

He folded the paper up, and stuck it in his pocket. Putting on a clean robe, he went downstairs, and out to Diagon Alley.

Harry looked in all the windows as he walked. He was still amazed by what everyone sold. Reaching Gringotts, he went through the doors and up to the teller.

"Can I help you?" the goblin asked as he leaned forward.

"Good morning, Sir. I need to see Ragnok," Harry replied as he rocked on the heels of his feet.

"Director Ragnok is a very busy goblin. He cannot just drop everything to see a child," The goblin sneered as he sat back down.

"I understand that, Sir. But this deals with my family will. In it, my mum said I should talk with him," Harry replied.

"Your name?" the goblin asked.

Harry looked around to see if anyone was paying attention and whispered, "Harry Potter, Sir. I have a letter about my parents will that he oversaw. Mister Ragnok will want to see me and the letter."

"I will see if Ragnok wishes to speak with you," the goblin said as he turned and slid off the chair.

Harry waited for the goblin to come back. He watched around him as witches and wizards came and left. After a few minutes, the goblin came back.

"Follow me," the goblin ordered. Harry followed the goblin to a door in the back.

Walking down the hallway, he saw the names on the doors, 'Bones, Greengrass, Longbottom, Lovegood, Edwards, Dumbledore, Black,' until they neared the end where a single door said 'Potter'.

The goblin knocked and opened the door.

"Go on in, he will help you," the goblin said.

"Thank you, Sir," Harry replied and walked into the room.

Harry looked around the room. The floor was white marble, while across from him was a large desk. There were two chairs in front of the desk. The walls were covered in dark wood paneling with bookcases spaced evenly about the walls. To his right was an archway that showed another room. It was a sitting room. A large fireplace dominated the wall to his left with a blazing fire in the center.

"Come in, Mister Potter, and have a seat," Ragnok said from behind the desk.

Harry walked forward to the desk and sat down, "Good morning, Sir."

"What may I do for you, Mister Potter," Ragnok asked.

"Sir, call me Harry, just Harry," Harry replied.

"And I am Ragnok. I am the director of Gringotts, and your family's banker. You told Mishook that you had a letter for me?"

Harry pulled the folded paper out and handed it to the Goblin, "Yes, Sir. My mum sent a copy of their will to my aunt. I found it. I am wondering why it wasn't followed."

"What do you mean it wasn't followed? Dumbledore said he processed the will," Ragnok asked as he took the paper.

"If that is so, why am I living with my aunt and uncle, and not with Sirius Black?" Harry stated as he sat back in his chair.

"WHAT!" Ragnok snarled as he opened the letter and quickly read it.

Harry watched as Ragnok grabbed a leaf of parchment, and a quill. He started writing on it. As one sheet of parchment was finished, he dropped it in a box that said 'Out', and it vanished.

"We're going to get to the bottom of this. Even with Sirius Black in prison, and the Longbottom's disabled, you should have been living with Amelia Bones," Ragnok stated as he sent another letter out.

"What about Mister Lupin?" Harry asked.

"He is ineligible to be your guardian..."

"Why?" Harry asked.

"He is a werewolf. The Wizmount passed laws that said that they are dark creatures. They are not to have children, work in the magical world, or even care for children. So they have been shunned," Ragnok said as there was a knock on the door.

"Oh, ok. I can understand that." Harry replied.

"But that doesn't leave out why you weren't left with Mrs. Bones," Ragnok said as he took a rolled parchment from the goblin that had come in.

Ragnok unrolled the parchment and started reading. As he read, the anger built up in him.

"It seems Mr. Dumbledore has ignored your parents' wishes. He sealed their will, made himself your guardian, and placed you with your aunt and uncle against your parents' wishes. Now, let's read the will. I assume you don't want the money to go to Sirius Black, the man who betrayed your parents. So the next amount is to Remus Lupin, I will have that money transferred to his account along with the deed to the cottage..."

"How did Sirius Black betray my parents?" Harry asked.

"He was their Secret-Keeper, and gave He Who Must Not Be Named their location..."

"No, he wasn't. Peter Pettigrew was their Secret-Keeper..." Harry said as he pulled out the second letter and handed it to Ragnok.

Ragnok picked up the second letter and started reading it. As he read, anger flared in his mind, and he stood up and went to the fireplace. Tossing a handful of powder into the fire, he said, "Department of Magical Law Enforcement, Amelia Bones' office."

Harry watched as Ragnok stuck his head in the fire and he could tell that the goblin was talking to someone, but he couldn't hear what was being said. A few second later, he stood up and stepped away from the fire. Then a woman stepped through. She was wearing a black outfit and had a silver badge on her chest. She had a monocle on her left eye. She looked around the room, and then at Harry.

"Director, let me see the letters," Amelia said as she walked to the desk.

Harry watched as the woman read the letters and then she set them down and turned to him.

"Mister Potter, my name is Amelia Bones, and I'm the head of the DMLE or the Department of Magical Law Enforcement," she said as she held out her hand.

"Call me Harry, just Harry," Harry replied as he shook her hand.

"Then call me Aunt Amelia," she said as she sat down and turned back to Ragnok, "please continue."

"Yes, Ma'am. As we were saying about the will, the Potters left several stipulations to their friends: a million Galleons to Sirius Black, Remus Lupin and Peter Pettigrew. We will transfer the one million as of right now to Remus Lupin, and hold off on Mr. Black and Pettigrew for now. We will also transfer one million pounds to the account of Mrs. Petunia Dursley, and notify her of it. Harry, this is a letter from your mother and father. It was left in my care. It was supposed to be given to you when you came in here, when you turned eleven.

"Also, in this box, is your ring. It states you are the heir to the Most Ancient and Noble House of Potter. You will receive the house ring, when you turn fourteen," Ragnok said as he slid the box and letter to Harry.

Harry opened the case and looked at the silver ring. The ring was three bands of silver, which formed together to make the head. The stone for the ring was an emerald, and inside the emerald was a pottery wheel slowly turning. Picking up the ring, he slid it on his left middle finger. The ring shimmered and shrunk to fit his hand.

"Welcome home, Mister Potter... I mean, Harry," Amelia said as she reached over and ruffled his hair.

"Thank you, I think," Harry replied.

"Why don't you take a trip down to your family vault, and look around, while I deal with these letters," Amelia said as she stood up.

"Ok. Thank you, Ragnok," Harry replied as they walked to the doors.

Stepping out of the room, Harry saw a young girl with reddish hair sitting in one of the chairs. Before he could say anything, Amelia did.

"Harry, this is my niece, Susan, I had her brought here because of what Ragnok told me in our conversation, I figured you could probably use a friend. Why don't you two go to your vault and while you look around, she can keep you company. If that's ok with you," Amelia asked.

Harry offered his hand to Susan and said, "Sure. Hi, Susan, my name is Harry Potter..."

Susan yiked, and turned bright red as she took his hand.

Susan felt warmth spread through her arm and up her body. Her heart seemed to flip in her chest.

Then a pulse went through her body as she replied, "Hi."

Edited By

Deenara2000, Bill Lewis, Futurist, TeNderLoin

Chapter Two

The Bones

Harry looked at the girl and his heart seemed to flip. She was very pretty, with bright blue eyes. Her red hair was in a long plait, which hung down her back. She was wearing light blue robes, and had a white scarf around her neck that seemed to be made of silk.

"Please, follow me," the goblin said and started walking away.

Susan smiled as she looked at Harry. Reaching out, she took his hand as they started following the goblin down the hall.

Harry had a silly look on his face as they stepped onto a platform with the goblin. Seconds later a cart rolled in, and the goblin climbed onto the front seat. Harry let Susan get in first and then he sat beside her on the other seat, behind the goblin. As the cart started up, Susan gripped Harry's hand.

The cart dropped into the darkness. Every few moments a torch whipped by as they took turns that had them sliding on the seat. Susan wrapped her arms around Harry's waist, and hung on as Harry stiffened at the hug. He then relaxed, and draped his arm around her, as the cart shot across a bridge and then plummeted two hundred feet to another level.

Susan screamed at the sudden drop, and whimpered as Harry laughed. The cart slowed down and came to a stop. The goblin hopped out and waited for Harry and Susan to climb out.

"Mr. Potter, go to the lectern and press your hand to it, with your ring inverted so as to place it in the depression in the lectern. If you are the true heir, you will be granted limited access to the vault of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter."

Harry nodded, and stepped up to the lectern and looked at the flat surface. Turning the ring on his finger, he placed his hand on the lectern. Pain shot through his hand, as if a hundred needles had stabbed it. Before he could pull his hand back, a grinding sound was heard.

Harry's jaw fell, as the doors opened. He could see piles of coins. Gold, silver and brass coins went from the floor to over eight feet high. The doors locked open and Harry stepped up to the edge and looked inside. Trunks sat along the walls with several openings leading back into more rooms. Behind the stack of coins was a large cabinet.

"Wow!" Harry said as Susan stepped up beside him.

"That's a lot of coins," Susan said.

"Yes, it is. I wonder how many?" Harry asked.

"23,736,736 Galleons, 3,837,937 Sickles, and 28,903 Knuts to be exact," the goblin said.

Harry looked at the goblin and replied, "Yes, that is a lot."

"That doesn't include what's in the chest, nor the paper bonds in the cabinet. Which neither can be removed," the goblin said as he stopped at the vault entrance.

"Thank you. Susan, want to come in with me?" Harry asked as he stepped inside.

"Oh no Harry, that's not allowed. Only family are allowed into the vaults," Susan said.

"Nonsense, if Mister Potter wants you to enter, all he has to do is allow it," the goblin replied.

"Come in with me Susan, you may see something I will want with me," Harry stated.

"Are..." she started to say and looked into his face, and added, "If you're sure. Then I'll come."

"I am," Harry replied and turned to the vault.

Susan followed Harry into the vault. They wandered into the other chambers. They found chests of gems, potion ingredients under stasis spells, weapons, armor, books, and more. Harry walked into

another room and found a pair of trunks. One had LP on it. The other had JCP on the top.

"Those must have been your parent's trunks, and look, there is a letter here from your mom," Susan said as she picked up a letter off a small table.

Harry took the letter and opened it.

My Dearest son

If your reading this then it means your father and I didn't survive the war. I want you to know we both love you, and we're sorry we were not there for you. I have prepared these two trunks for you. Mine is a normal trunk holding your fathers and my journals, notes and photo albums. The second trunk is a 'seven-chamber' trunk. The first chamber is for your school clothes and normal clothes. The second is a potion storage room, and the third is for parchment and writing material. The fourth is a library. Now the library and the potion storage room connect to two of the rooms here in the vault. The library room and the potion storage room, each has a master list. If you check the items you need, they will appear in the trunk. The fifth chamber is a four-bedroom apartment with five baths, a kitchen, study room, game room, exercise room, and a living room. The sixth is a spell practice room, which connects to the apartment, as well as to the seventh room. Your father set the seventh room up as a jail. Your father was an aurors, and would go on long missions, undercover. He would take the trunk with him so he had a place to stash prisoners that he captured. By tapping your wand to the trunk, you can shrink it down to the size of a matchbox, so you can take it with you.

The last item, Harry, I must warn you that there is possibly a prophecy about you. It was made before you were born and it could refer to you, or to Neville Longbottom. It goes like this:

"THE ONE WITH THE POWER TO VANQUISH THE DARK LORD APPROACHES...BORN TO THOSE WHO HAVE THRICE DEFIED HIM, BORN AS THE SEVENTH MONTH DIES...AND THE DARK LORD WILL MARK HIM AS HIS EQUAL, BUT HE WILL HAVE POWER THE DARK LORD KNOWS NOT...AND EITHER MUST DIE AT THE HAND OF THE OTHER FOR NEITHER CAN LIVE WHILE THE OTHER SURVIVES...THE ONE WITH THE POWER

TO VANQUISH THE DARK LORD WILL BE BORN AS THE SEVENTH MONTH DIES..." (HPOotP)

Now, Harry, don't worry about anything. It doesn't mean it's you. It could be Neville. If it is, please stay friends with him and support him. I loved watching the two of you play together when you were infants. Now, son, you are off to Hogwarts for your magical education. It will be lots of fun for you. When you get there, you will be led into the great hall, and your name will be called. You will go up and sit on a stool, and then a hat... called the 'Sorting Hat'... will be put on your head. The hat reads your mind, and looks at your character, to decide which of the four houses you will go into. The Hat will take your wishes into consideration, as well, as it decides what house you will be in.

"There are four houses. They are Gryffindor (your father's house) Ravenclaw (my house), Hufflepuff and Slytherin. Each house has its own characteristics, so choose wisely. There is a book in the library on the four houses. It explains each house and their inner workings. Son, your father told me the other day... when I told him I was going to write this letter, just in case something happened... that you must learn Occlumency.

What is Occlumency you ask? It is a way to protect your mind from others who would look through your memories, for a way to hurt you. I should let you know, Headmaster Dumbledore is one person who can do this. So, if you're alone with him, do not look him in the eyes until you learn it. There are three books in the library to teach it to you. Also, take our family Grimoire, for the spells in it belong to you and our family. No one else is allowed to look at it, or touch it. It can kill them. So be very careful with it.

Your loving Mother,

Mum

Harry stood there crying and then he handed the letter to Susan who quickly read it and took him into her arms.

"It's ok, Harry, let it out," Susan said as she rocked him in her arms side to side.

"She loved me! No one has ever said they loved me, before," Harry cried out and went down to his knees.

Susan followed him down, still holding him and gently kissed his forehead on the center of his scar. Her nose wrinkled as she smelled something horrible and when she moved her face away the smell dissipated.

'Odd! Why is there a foul smell coming from his scar? I'd better ask Auntie about it,' she wondered as Harry stopped shaking.

"Are you ok?" Susan asked as the shaking stopped.

"Yes. Let's see if we can find anything else of my parents'. I want to take them all with me in my trunk," Harry said as they stood up.

Susan and Harry went through the rest of the vault, not knowing that up above in the bank, decisions were being made about Harry.

ooOoOoo

Amelia watched as the two children followed the goblin, then turned back to Ragnok and said, "Ragnok, first I want to say thank you for contacting me about Harry. Next, I want you to have his guardianship transferred to me. I'll sign the papers, and then you will enact the reading of his parents' will. Also, can you have your goblins lock down all his properties? Please initiate full inventory checks of them all, and of his vaults. If anything is missing, I want them recovered, and the items stored in his vault. Next, I want a full health check on him. His size worries me. He should be taller than he is, and he is way too thin for his size, even now. If he's been abused, I want to know."

"It will be done. Also, I will have them check his blocks to see if they've been removed. I know two were put on him, when he was a year old. One was on his magic because he was showing signs of accidental magic. The other was on the Metamorphmagus ability he received from the blood adoption to Sirius Black..."

"Blood adoption?" Amelia asked.

"Harry's father James, and Sirius Black, were what the American Indians call 'blood brothers'. When Sirius left his family and moved in

with the Potters, James and Sirius came into the bank. They had us initiate a blood bonding ceremony, for the both of them," Ragnok said.

"I see. Yes, Harry shouldn't have his magic blocked, especially with him starting at Hogwarts in a month. If he has the blocks they should be removed," Amelia replied as she signed a confidentiality paper to have the medical procedure done.

For the next hour they talked about the young heir to a Most Noble and Ancient House, and what he has been denied, as Amelia signed the paperwork that Ragnok slid across to her.

"You do know that Headmaster Dumbledore will try and block you from taking custody," Ragnok said as he continued going through the Potter account paperwork.

"Let him, I will have his bony butt in Azkaban for failing to follow a legal will..." Amelia stopped talking as the door opened and Susan and Harry walked in.

"Welcome back. Did you find anything interesting?" she asked.

"Yes, I found my parents' journals from school... swords, an awesome trunk my dad owned, pictures, paintings... swords, books, swords, and papers, and swords... oh, and armor, including a set of robes that shrank down to my size when I touched them..." Harry replied excitedly.

Amelia snickered over Harry talking about the swords. Typical boy, see a sword and his eyes went wide with imaginary sword fighting. "Well, Harry, how would you like to come live with me?" she said as she knelt in front of him.

"Really? I won't have to go home to my aunt and uncle?" Harry asked with eyes that pleaded for her to say yes.

"You should have never gone there. In your parents will, I should have had custody of you. But the headmaster went against your parents' wishes..."

"I know. I found a letter from my mum, and she mentioned that. She also mentioned a prophecy that was made about me..."

"We'll discuss the letter, later. For now, let's get you to Bone Manor and situated," Amelia said as she stood up.

"Ok, but what about my stuff at the Leaky Cauldron?" Harry asked.

"We'll go pick it up and then floo to my home," Amelia replied.

"Madam Bones, the healers are ready to see Harry, and I've dispatched a guard to pick up Lord Potter's belongings," interrupted Ragnok from his desk.

"Good, let's get down there and let your healers do their magicks," Amelia replied as she walked to the door and stepped out.

"Thank you, Ragnok," Amelia said.

As they opened the door to the outer office, she pulled her wand out. Harry followed his new guardian and watched in awe as she shrank his trunk and handed it to him.

"I love magic!" Harry stated as he looked at his shrunken trunk.

He put it in his pocket, and started following Ragnok out the door.

Amelia and Susan laughed as they followed Ragnok and Harry out the door and down a long a hallway. Every twenty feet there was a door on each wall, with a goblin guard standing in front of it. They were wearing full armor, and held a spear. Harry fell back to walk beside Amelia and Susan.

"So what are they going to do to me?" Harry asked.

"They are going to do a full medical check-up on you, and remove the blocks on your magic. After that, we'll head for your new home," Amelia replied as Ragnok opened a door and they went inside the medical wing.

Harry stopped and looked around the bright room. A single bed lay in the center with cabinets mounted to two of the walls. A single door was across from the one that they had used to enter. Just as Amelia closed the door, the other one opened, and a man walked in. He

was wearing white robes with a red symbol on his chest above his heart.

"Good morning, I am Healer White. Who is the patient?"

"Mister Potter is," Amelia said.

"Hello, Mr. Potter. Please lie down on the examining table, and we'll check you out," White ordered.

Harry climbed onto the medical bed and lay back. Harry watched as the healer walked over and held out his wand. He started at the top of Harry's head and slowly drew it down his body to his feet. To the left, an image appeared of Harry's body without his clothes, skin, or muscles. A dozen red spots started flashing on the image, as his skeleton glowed a bright yellow.

"What does that all mean?" Harry asked.

"The yellow says your skeleton has been neglected. The red spots show broken bones. You have also been malnourished, and your eyes need to be corrected. What is this? Your cursed scar has never been treated? By the goddess, this will be rectified immediately! Let's get started. Ragnok, send for a curse breaker to remove this curse, while I start the healing of young Mister Potter," White ordered as he started casting healing spells onto Harry.

Harry drifted off to sleep, as one of the spells that Healer White cast was a sleep spell. For the next two hours, the healer worked on Harry. Broken bones were mended, and potions poured into and onto him.

Then the curse breaker came in. Within ten minutes he diagnosed that Harry had a soul fragment in his head. Several goblin curse breakers were called in. It was removed and destroyed. As the curse was broken, the scar faded. Soon, it was barely seen by the naked eye. Harry's eyes were then fixed, and Harry was awakened.

Harry opened his eyes, and blinked in surprise. He looked up at Amelia as she smiled down at him.

"How are you feeling?" she asked.

"Better! My head doesn't hurt, and for some reason I can see without my glasses," Harry replied as he sat up.

"That's because the curse breakers were able to remove the curse that was in your scar. It was something that should have been done years ago. They repaired your eyes, as well," Amelia said as she helped Harry sit up.

The door opened, and Healer White walked in with a potion holder. The holder held six potions, and each was marked. He set the holder down on the counter, he pulled out his wand, and did a quick scan of Harry. Several of the red spots were gone. The eyes were healed, and the larger curse icon was gone, as well.

"That is good news," White said as he banished the charm.

"What is good news, Sir," Harry asked.

"The spells have started the healing processes. Now, Mister Potter, these are your potions for the next month. You will take all of each of them, when you go to bed, tonight. The vials will refill by morning. After the month is over, you will take the red capped ones only for the next three months. Now the blocks on your magic have been removed as well as four monitoring spells that were on you. We also removed two unknown spells that were on you as well as a compulsion spell, which seemed to be dormant for some reason. We also vaccinated you for all wizard world childhood diseases, as well as the muggle ones," White said as he handed the vials to Amelia.

"Thank you, Healer White. I will have a bonus sent to you, and to all your staff for what you did. Also, please keep what happened quiet. Harry doesn't need more publicity," Amelia ordered. Seeing Harry yawn, she said, "Let's get you home, Harry. Tomorrow, Susan and Hanna can take you clothes shopping."

"I'm fine," Harry stated as he slid off the bed and stood up.

"Your clothes are not fine..."

"I would suggest two sets of clothes until the end of the month. The nutrient potions, along with the bone and muscle growth potions, will not run their course until the twenty-fifth," White suggested.

"Thank you, we'll do that. Come, Harry, Susan... it's time to go home," Amelia ordered.

Harry followed Amelia, with Susan at his side. They stopped in front of a large fireplace as Amelia pulled a pot off the mantle.

"What's going on?" Harry asked.

"Floo," Susan replied.

"Floo? What is that?"

"It's how we can go from one place to another until we can learn to apparite on our own," Amelia replied as she held out the pot and said, "Now take some floo powder, toss it into the fire and say 'Bone Manor!' and then step into the fire. You will appear at your new home. Susan, you go first and help Harry. Being it is his first time, he'll probably trip or land on his face."

"Ok, Auntie," Susan replied.

She reached in, grabbed some floo powder, and tossed the powder into the fire.

The yellow flames turned green, and she stepped in as she said, "Bone Manor!"

She vanished.

"I love magic!" Harry said.

He reached into the jar and followed Susan's directions. Harry spun out of control and landed on his back at Susan's feet. He was looking up her robes, and he turned bright red as she stepped back.

"Are you ok? Why are you turning red? Are you hurt?" Susan asked as she knelt beside Harry.

"I'm fine," Harry replied.

He rolled over and stood up, just as Amelia came out of the fireplace. Amelia led Harry up the stairs, and down the hall to a bedroom.

Across from it was another room. It had a nameplate on the door that said 'Susan'.

Amelia opened the door to Harry's room. Inside the room were a large four-poster bed, a dresser, an armoire, and several bookcases. Another door led off to the left, and a third, to the right.

Amelia set the two chests down, and enlarged them as she said, "The door to your left is your private bath. The other door is to your private study, where you can do your homework. You can use the bookcases for books you want or bring up from the library. In the library, there is a book sitting on a pedestal. Do not touch that book. It can kill you, it is the Bones family Grimoire. Only Bones' family members can use it. Just like only Potter's can use your family Grimoire, which should be in Potter Manor."

"Actually, I have it in my chest. My mother told me to take it with me, in her letter," Harry stated.

"Did she warn you about other people using it?" Amelia asked.

"Yes, Ma'am," Harry replied with a yawn.

"Good. Now here are your potions. Remember, before you go to bed, take them. Now, are you hungry?" she asked.

"Not really. I'm just really tired," Harry replied.

"Then we'll let you get some sleep. If you wake up, and you're hungry, just call for Lipsy. She'll get you something to eat. Now, so that you know, Lipsy is a house elf. A house elf is like a butler or maid. They have their own magic. We treat them right, but some families don't. We'll let you get some sleep, now. Come on, Susan," Amelia said as she turned and walked for the door.

"Thank you, Aunt Amelia," Harry said.

He went to his chest. Pulling out his pajamas, he quickly put them on, and then drank his potions. Climbing into bed, he was asleep in minutes.

ooOoOoo

It was two weeks since Harry had come and joined Amelia's house. She had formally adopted him. His muggle guardians had given him up with no problems, due to having a choice of either going to jail for child abuse, or giving him up. She also set them up in a new home and had her house elves pack everything and take it to the new home. On the fifth day of Harry coming to live with them, she had signed the papers and the wards fell without Dumbledore knowing because he was out of the country on ICW business. Setting her cup of tea down, she looked out the back window at the pool. Harry and Susan were in the pool and Susan was teaching Harry how to swim and with the way he devoured books, she knew that he would master it within days. With a smile, she went back to her paperwork when the fireplace flared.

"Hi, Auntie Amelia! Is Susan home?" the head asked floating in the fire.

"Hello, Hanna. Yes, she is. How was Brazil?" Amelia asked as she smiled at her best friend's daughter.

"Was fun. We went to the magical and the muggle shopping areas, while Mum was at the meetings for her job. I got a gift for Susan, can I bring it over?" she asked.

"Sure, bring your suit. Susan is teaching a friend how to swim," Amelia replied.

"Ok! I'll be there in five minutes," Hanna said and the flames went out.

Amelia went to the glass door and opened it, "Susan, Hanna is on the way over," she shouted.

"Ok, thanks. I think Harry is getting the hang of swimming," she shouted back.

"Good, I'll have Lipsy make lunch," Amelia replied and closed the door as the two preteens climbed out of the water. Amelia looked at the fading scars on the boy's back, and a shiver went down her spine. How he had survived ten years abuse with those scars, and yet had kept his polite attitude, she would never know. She was glad that the wizard world had creams and lotions that would make the

scars fade, in time. Otherwise, had he continued to live in the muggle world, he would have had them for life.

The fire roared to life, and a pink-faced blonde girl with her hair in pigtails stepped out, holding a wrapped gift.

"Hello, Hanna. They are on the patio, having lunch. Why don't you go join them, then you can go swimming," Amelia said with a smile.

"Thanks, Auntie Amelia," Hanna replied.

She walked to the door and stepped outside.

ooOoOoo

Harry set his sandwich down and picked up his drink as the door opened and a girl walked out.

"Hi Susan, who's this?" Hanna asked as she set the gift down beside her best friend.

"Hanna, this is Harry Potter. Harry, this is my best friend Hanna Abbot," Susan said as she introduced them.

"Harry Pottter?" Hanna stuttered as she held out her hand, and then asked, "Do you have the scar?"

"Not anymore. Aunt Amelia had it removed," Harry said with a smile and then added, "It's nice to meet you," as he held out his hand.

Hanna reached out and shook Harry's hand and felt a warmth run up her arm and into her chest. The warmth made her heart race and she smiled at the boy-who-lived.

"Hi, it's nice to meet you, as well. Susan, this is for you. I'm sorry, I didn't get you anything, Harry."

"That's ok. There was no way you could have known I was here," Harry replied with a smile.

Susan grabbed the package and tore it open. Inside was a box. She opened it, and it was a blowgun, with a dozen darts as well as a shrunken target board that enlarged when she pulled it out.

"Wicked," Susan said as she loaded a dart and blew it across the patio. The dart hit one of the shade trees and stuck.

"Ouch, that looks like it would hurt," Harry said.

"I agree," Susan replied as she hugged her friend and went to retrieve her dart.

"The store I bought it at, said the natives use them for hunting with a powerful sleeping draught on the needles," Hanna said as she sat down and grabbed a sandwich.

"Wicked," Harry said as he looked at the needles and then asked, "Can I try?"

"Sure," Susan said and handed the blowgun to Harry.

Harry loaded the gun, held it to his mouth and blew. The dart flew through the air. It hit a tree, but bounced off and flew in another direction, where someone cried out.

Auror John Dawlish appeared with the dart stuck in his left arm, "Damn that hurts!" he said as he pulled the dart out and walked over to the table.

"Sorry Uncle John," Susan said as she took the dart, wiped it off and put it away in the box with the blowgun.

"Who are you?" Harry asked.

"Auror John Dawlish, I am one of Amelia's guards. Please be careful with that thing, it could put an eye out," he said, and then vanished as he reactivated his 'notice-me-not' spell.

"Guards?" Harry asked.

"Aunt Amelia is a target because she is the head of the law enforcement division. She has four aurors permanently assigned to her as guards," Susan says as she took a bite of her sandwich.

"Oh, so what are we doing this afternoon?" Harry asked as he drained his glass.

"Shopping, I think. You need clothes, now that you have reached your height. Plus, you'll need new robes for school. I heard Aunt Amelia say to Jasmine, her secretary, that you will wear your house crest on them, just to piss off Dumbledore," Susan said with a giggle.

"Susan, language," Hanna snapped.

"Hey, those were her words, not mine!" Susan replied with a smile and another giggle.

That afternoon saw Harry dragged from store to store in the muggle world, and in Diagon Alley. New robes were made in a dozen colors, with the Potter Crest on the left, over his heart. He also picked up a birthday gift for Susan, as her birthday was coming up on the twenty-seventh of August.

While in the muggle world, the three kids found calligraphy pens at a stationary store. They each bought a dozen of the pens, with boxes of nibs and ink, as well as spiral notebooks to keep notes in. Harry also picked up books at the Foyle's bookstore, including a new series just started by an American author named Elizabeth Moon. He had started reading book one of 'The Deed of Paksenarrion', and was enjoying them.

Harry studied the books his mum had told him to work on. On the thirtieth of August, Amelia tested his defenses regarding Occlumency. She said his shields were adequate, but told him to continue training. She asked what monster he had used as his primary attacking weapon and was surprised by the answer. She started laughing as she imagined Dumbledore trying to get by the creature, and left him to continue packing his trunk.

The morning of September the first rolled around. Harry, Susan and Hanna were ready to floo to platform 9 and $\frac{3}{4}$ s, for their train ride. With their trunks shrunk down and in their pockets, and their backpacks on their back, they carried their owls in their travel cages. They stepped into the floo, and appeared on the platform.

Harry stared at the scarlet steam engine that was waiting next to the platform, with a few people milling about. A sign overhead said: 'Hogwarts Express - 11 o'clock'. Harry looked at the clock and it said ten after ten.

Smoke from the engine drifted over the heads of the chattering crowd, while cats of every colour wound here and there between their legs. Owls hooted to each other in a disgruntled sort of way, over the babble and the scraping of heavy trunks. Amelia led the three kids onto the train and to one of the middle compartments. They went in and she unshrunk Hanna and Susan's trunks. She then levitated them up into the magical rack, as Harry pulled his trunk out. He tapped it with his wand. As the trunk grew to its right size, she levitated it into the overhead rack, as well.

"Now you three kids have your lunch and drinks. Do not eat too much from the trolley when she comes by. Have a good year and send me a letter every week on how it's going and let me know what houses you're in," Amelia said as she kissed all three of the kids and gave them a hug.

"We will, Aunt Amelia. We will miss you, and we'll see you at Christmas," Susan replied as she hugged her Aunt tightly.

Harry gave Amelia a big hug with tears at the corner of his eyes, "Thank you for everything, Aunt Amelia."

"You're welcome, Harry. I just wish I had been there sooner, for you. Now you take care of the girls for me, and don't let anyone get to you. Remember, you're a Potter, and they stand for loyalty to their friends," Amelia said with a smile and left the compartment.

The three kids watched as Amelia apparited to the platform and turned back to their discussion on the story 'The Deed of Paksenarrion'. Harry was into book two, while the girls had just started book one. The door opened and a blond haired girl stepped in with a black haired girl behind her.

"Hi Susan, we missed you at the ball," Daphne Greengrass said as she looked at her friend. Behind her, her best friend Tracy followed.

"I know, but we had an emergency come up. We were out of town, dealing with it. Hi, Tracy. Good to see you, too," Susan replied.

"Hi, Susan. Hi, Hanna. Who's your friend?" Tracy asked.

"Come in and join us. I'll introduce you," Susan said and the two girls dragged their trunks in. Harry helped them get them into the rack as the door opened and Harry shook his head as he looked at the two twins standing there.

"Can we join you Susan?" Parvati asked.

"Sure, come on in Parvati, Padma," Susan replied as a dark haired girl with frizzy looking hair started to squeeze by and something made her step out and ask, "Hi, I'm Susan Bones. What is your name?"

"Hermione Granger," Hermione replied.

"Want to join us?" Susan asked.

"Can I?" Hermione asked excitedly.

She was hoping to make friends at the new school and seeing all the girls in the compartment, she desperately hoped so. In her last school, she had been ridiculed for being a bookworm.

"Yes, you can! Come on, I'll introduce you to everyone," Susan said as she dragged the girl into the compartment. Harry was lifting the trunks up into the storage racks as the girls sat down. Seeing the girl with the last trunk, he tapped the trunk with his wand, and lifted it up into the rack, along with everyone else's.

"How did you do that?" Hermione asked in surprise.

"It's called the feather-light spell. Susan's mum taught it to me, so I could get the trunks up into the racks," Harry said as he shut the door to the compartment, and sat down in his spot.

"Ok, everyone. First let me introduce you all," Susan said and then pointed at the first person. "This is Daphne Greengrass, and her friend Tracy Davis. Next to Tracy are Parvati and Padma Patil. Beside them is Hermione Granger. To my friends left is Hanna Abbot and this," she said as she touched Harry's shoulder, "is Harry Potter, my semi-brother."

"WHAT!" Daphne asked in shock.

"Yes. It seems Harry was supposed to come to my Aunt after his parent's death and the incarceration of Sirius Black... which was illegal, by the way, as he hasn't had a trial..."

"Impossible, he is guilty, he was the Potter's Secret-Keeper. He was tried..." Tracy said.

"No, he wasn't. Another person was the Secret-Keeper, but without finding that person, all we have are some old letters from my mum saying who was the Secret-Keeper. They need to find him to clear my godfather. Until they do, my godfather has to stay in prison. Aunt Amelia did have him moved to a minimum-security ward, on his oath that he wouldn't try to escape while they look for the Secret-Keeper.

Hermione sat there listening, she wanted to ask Harry so many questions about his life, but was afraid to, because she was scared she would be asked to leave.

Harry stood up and walked over to Daphne and Tracy, holding out his hand, he said, "Daphne, Tracy, its nice to meet you."

Daphne smiled and took his hand and was surprised when Harry turned it over and kissed it. She felt a warm feeling run up her arm and to her heart, which seemed to melt as she looked into his green eyes. She watched as he turned to Tracy and did the same thing.

Tracy shivered at the warm feeling racing through her body and she smiled at Harry, "Nice to meet you."

"The pleasure is all mine," Harry replied as he turned to the twins and said, "Parvati and Padma, it's a pleasure to make your acquaintances," and he kissed both of their hands.

Both twins smiled and stared into Harry's eyes as he kissed their hands. They sighed as he turned and walked to Hermione and repeated his words.

"Thank you, Harry," Hermione replied as she felt the warmth go through her body.

"You're welcome. Now, I need to use the loo, so please excuse me while I go find it," Harry said.

He left the compartment and wandered up the isle to the end. As he was coming back from the loo, he heard a boy talking.

"Anyone seen a toad?"

"No! Now go away, squib," a voice said.

Harry looked in and saw a pudgy looking boy being browbeat by the blond git he had seen, when he had gotten his first robes. The boy turned and left the compartment.

Harry said, "I'll help you. What's your toad's name?"

"Trevor."

Pulling his wand out he said, "Accio: Trevor the Toad."

A brown mass flew through the air, and slapped into Harry's open hand. Looking at the toad, he said, "Here you go..."

"Neville, Neville Longbottom," Neville said.

"Here you go, Neville," Harry replied as he handed the toad to the boy. They started walking down the passageway when another conversation stopped them.

"I have to find Harry Potter, he and I are going to be best mates. We're going to do everything together, and then he's going to buy me lots of stuff in the years to come."

Harry looked in the open compartment door and saw a redheaded boy talking to two other boys, who seemed to be listening to him.

"Kind of a shallow friendship," one said as the sat down.

Harry dragged Neville away from the door, saying, "Hey, Neville, want to join me in my compartment? We have one opening left," he asked desperately, because he didn't want anything to do with that git!

"Sure, let me get my trunk," Neville said.

They stepped into the compartment across from the one Harry was in. Grabbing the boy's trunk off the rack, they carried it into the other compartment, and put it away with the others.

Harry introduced Neville to the girls, after they sat down and closed the compartment's door.

They talked about Hogwarts, and which houses they would be in. The girls wondered how they'd be sorted, and Harry told them what his mum had said in her letter. They all said Harry would probably be in Gryffindor and Harry shook his head no.

"No, I don't want to be in Gryffindor nor Slytherin. Reason is, Slytherin has a hatred of all Non-purebloods and Gryffindor's would use me as a figure piece. I figure I want Hufflepuff because of their loyalty. I know I'm not smart enough for Ravenclaw," Harry said.

He then looked at the girls, and pointed at them, "Susan, and Hanna, I see you in Hufflepuff with Neville and I. The rest of you girls should get into Ravenclaw, because I just know your wicked smart."

"I'll probably be in Slytherin," Daphne replied sadly.

"Why?" Neville asked.

"My family has always been in Slytherin," she said.

"Tell the Hat you are not your family. Tell the Hat you want Ravenclaw, I would be worried about you in Slytherin. From what my father and mum said in their letters and journals, you would hate it," Harry said.

He stood up and walked to the girl and gave her a hug. Daphne smiled, looked up at Harry, and nodded.

"Ok, I will," she said with a smile.

"Good, then its settled," Harry said as he sat down and the train started moving. The door opened and they looked at the redheaded boy standing there.

"Can I sit here? Everywhere else is full," Ron asked as his eyes fell on Harry Potter.

"I really doubt that there is no room everywhere else. And, as you can see, this compartment is full," Harry replied.

Ron tried to pull Neville up. Harry stood and pushed the redhead out of the compartment.

"Hey, make the squib leave," Ron said as he pointed at Neville.

"This is Neville Longbottom, of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Longbottom! They are an ancient ally of the House of Potter. Now I don't know who the hell you are, but Neville is our friend. Now, goodbye," Harry snarled.

He slammed the compartment door closed, locked it, and sat down. Neville smiled at Harry's words.

Chapter Three

Hogwarts

The train crossed England and up into Scotland, inside the compartment. Harry had brought out the Magical Trivia Purist game along with a folding table from his trunk they played the hours away. The magical game had expanded so they could all play. Daphne was winning, and Neville and Harry were tied for last, but they were having fun when the door opened and three boys stood there.

Three boys entered and Harry recognized the middle one at once: it was the pale boy from Madam Malkin's robe shop. He was looking at Harry with a lot more interest than he'd shown back in Diagon Alley.

"Is it true?" he said. "They're saying all down the train that Harry Potter's in this compartment. So it's you, is it?"

"Yes," Harry as he set the dice down on the board game. He was looking at the other boys. Both of them were thickset and looked extremely mean. Standing either side of the pale boy they looked like bodyguards.

"Oh, this is Crabbe and this is Goyle," said the pale boy carelessly, noticing where Harry was looking. "And my name's Malfoy, Draco Malfoy."

Neville gave a slight cough, which might have been hiding a snigger. Draco Malfoy looked at him.

"Think my name's funny, do you? No need to ask who you are. My father's told me all about squib Longbottom and how fat you are."

He turned back to Harry.

"You'll soon find out some wizarding families are much better than others, Potter. You don't want to go making friends with the wrong sort. I can help you there."

He held out his hand to shake Harry's, but Harry didn't take it.

"I think I can tell who the wrong sort are for myself, thanks," he said coolly.

Draco Malfoy didn't go red, but a pink tinge appeared in his pale cheeks.

"I'd be careful if I were you, Potter," he said slowly. "Unless you're a bit politer you'll go the same way as your parents. They didn't know what was good for them, either. You hang around with riff-raff like the Longbottom's and that Hagrid and it'll rub off on you."

"You have room to talk. A person who hangs around two blokes who look like they're your best buddies... Oh wait, the way you introduced them. Let me guess, you're the bottom in the relationship," Harry replied with a smirk.

Most of the girls giggled but Hanna, Tracy and Hermione blushed a bright red as they knew what Harry had just called Draco.

"What are you talking about Potter?" Draco replied with a sneer.

"I said take your two lovers and leave," Harry said loudly as he stood up.

Draco turned bright pink, and snapped, "They're not my lovers!"

"Could have fooled me, from how they stand so close to you, and your hair. How much care product do you use?" Harry replied and pushed Draco back into the hallway and said, "Now take your weird lovers group and go away. I'm into girls, not blokes."

"I said I'm not gay!" Draco shouted.

Harry saw the doors open on the other compartments and replied loudly, "Hey, its ok. Coming out of the closet, I have to respect you for that. But please don't drag me into your relationships. Like I said, I like girls."

Laughter burst from the nearby compartments as Draco fumed.

"My father..."

"Look, please now that is sick. You and your father? Ewww. I don't even want to think of that," Harry said as he slammed the door shut and locked it.

Everyone in the compartment burst into laughter as Harry turned around and bowed. "What a git!" he said as he sat down.

"I gather you've met Malfoy before?" Susan asked.

"Yes, when I was being fitted for robes. He was being a pompous arse," Harry replied as he took a drink of his coke.

"He is such a Slytherin," Daphne said as she started putting the game away.

"Yeah, but wouldn't it be funny if he was sorted into Gryffindor?" Susan replied.

Everyone laughed at thinking about the slimy git being put in Gryffindor.

"Yeah, and then Ron Weasley is a Slytherin, but I bet he is placed in Gryffindor," Tracy replied and then added, "From what I gather his whole family has been in that house."

"Hopefully the hat sees how he was going to use me and puts him in the right house," Harry said as he folded up the table and put it away in his trunk.

"That is the coolest trunk," Daphne said as she watched Harry walk down stairs and lean the table against the wall.

"Thanks, it was my dad's. He had it designed for his job, and it was left in the vault. So I took it for my school one," Harry replied as he closed the trunk.

Harry was about to sit down when someone shouted that they were ten minutes from Hogwarts.

"We better get changed," Harry said and everyone scrambled for their trunks and robes. Harry and Neville stepped out into the passageway so the girls could change. They pulled their robes on

over their clothes and Harry could hear the girls talking among themselves.

They waited for the door to open and then went back inside. Sitting down, they talked about their upcoming classes and which would be their favorite class. Neville said he thought Herbology would be best. Harry, Daphne, and Padma thought DADA, while the rest were divided among transfiguration and charms. They felt the train slow and the voice came on telling them to leave their trunks and cages on the train.

Harry went to his trunk, and ran his right forefinger over the lock of his trunk and it glowed blue for a second.

"What was that Harry?" Hermione asked.

"Blood lock. Only I can open the trunk now," Harry replied as the train came to a stop.

"Blood magic is dark," she said in surprise,

"No, it's not," Daphne replied as she locked her trunk.

"But..."

"Hermione, don't believe everything you read," Susan said as she opened the door.

Harry led the seven girls and Neville off the train and onto the platform. The girls unknowing clustered around Harry while Neville held on tightly to his toad. Harry heard a voice he recognized and looked for him.

"Firs'-years! Firs'-years over here! All right there, Harry?"

Hagrid's big hairy face beamed over the sea of heads.

"C'mon, follow me – any more firs'-years? Mind yer step, now! Firs'-years follow me!"

Slipping and stumbling, they followed Hagrid down what seemed to be a steep, narrow path. It was so dark either side of them that Harry thought there must be thick trees there. Nobody spoke much.

"Yeh'll get yer firs' sight o' Hogwarts in a sec," Hagrid called over his shoulder, "jus' round this bend here."

There was a loud 'Ooooooh!'.

The narrow path had opened suddenly on to the edge of a great black lake. Perched atop a high mountain on the other side, its windows sparkling in the starry sky, was a vast castle with many turrets and towers.

"No more'n four to a boat!" Hagrid called, pointing to a fleet of little boats sitting in the water by the shore. Harry and Susan were followed into their boat by Neville and Hermione.

"Everyone in?" shouted Hagrid, who had a boat to himself, "Right then – FORWARD!"

And the fleet of little boats moved off all at once, gliding across the lake, which was as smooth as glass. Everyone was silent, staring up at the great castle overhead. It towered over them as they sailed nearer and nearer to the cliff on which it stood.

"Heads down!" yelled Hagrid as the first boats reached the cliff; they all bent their heads and the little boats carried them through a curtain of ivy which hid a wide opening in the cliff face. They were carried along a dark tunnel, which seemed to be taking them right underneath the castle, until they reached a kind of underground harbour, where they clambered out on to rocks and pebbles.

"Oy, you there! Is this your toad?" said Hagrid, who was checking the boats as people climbed out of them.

"Trevor!" cried Neville blissfully, holding out his hands. Then they clambered up a passageway in the rock after Hagrid's lamp, coming out at last on to smooth, damp grass right in the shadow of the castle.

Harry snickered and patted his friend on his back, "You have an escape artist as a familiar," he said.

"Yeah, I do," Neville sighed as he looked at his toad and pointed his finger at him, "Bad Trevor."

Everyone laughed and they started following Hagrid. The girls clustered around Harry as to protect him from danger.

They walked up a flight of stone steps and crowded around the huge, oak front door.

"Everyone here? You there, still got yer toad?"

Hagrid raised a gigantic fist and knocked three times on the castle door.

The door swung open at once. A tall, black-haired witch in emerald-green robes stood there. She had a very stern face and Harry's first thought was that this was not someone to cross.

"The firs'-years, Professor McGonagall," said Hagrid.

"Thank you, Hagrid. I will take them from here."

She pulled the door wide. The Entrance Hall was so big you could have fitted the whole of the Dursleys' house in it. The stone walls were lit with flaming torches like the ones at Gringotts, the ceiling was too high to make out, and a magnificent marble staircase facing them led to the upper floors.

They followed Professor McGonagall across the flagged stone floor. Harry could hear the drone of hundreds of voices from a doorway to the right – the rest of the school must already be here – but Professor McGonagall showed the first-years into a small empty chamber off the hall. They crowded in, standing rather closer together than they would usually have done, peering about nervously.

"Welcome to Hogwarts," said Professor McGonagall. "The start-of-term banquet will begin shortly, but before you take your seats in the Great Hall, you will be sorted into your houses. The Sorting is a very important ceremony because, while you are here, your house will be something like your family within Hogwarts. You will have classes with the rest of your house, sleep in your house dormitory and spend free time in your house common room.

"The four houses are called Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw and Slytherin. Each house has its own noble history and each has produced outstanding witches and wizards. While you are at Hogwarts, your triumphs will earn your house points, while any rule-breaking will lose house points. At the end of the year, the house with the most points is awarded the House Cup, a great honour. I hope each of you will be a credit to whichever house becomes yours.

"The Sorting Ceremony will take place in a few minutes in front of the rest of the school. I suggest you all smarten yourselves up as much as you can while you are waiting."

Her eyes lingered for a moment on Neville's cloak, which was fastened under his left ear, and on Ron's smudged nose. Harry nervously tried to flatten his hair.

"I shall return when we are ready for you," said Professor McGonagall. "Please wait quietly."

She left the chamber. Harry swallowed.

"How exactly do they sort us into houses?" he heard one boy ask Ron.

"Some sort of test, I think. Fred said it hurts a lot, but I think he was joking."

Harry wanted to laugh, but he didn't, how could anyone believe that rubbish. A test? Sheshm he thought as he looked around anxiously and saw that everyone, but his friends, looked terrified too. No one was talking much except Hermione, who was whispering very fast about all the spells she'd learnt and wondering which ones they would be learning first in class. Then something happened which made him jump about a foot in the air – several people behind him screamed.

"Oh please, don't tell me none of your parents gave you any clue on how we're sorted?" Harry said just loud enough for everyone to hear.

"Like yours could, scarhead," Draco sneered.

"Actually they did in their journals. You put a magical hat on and it tells you where you're going..."

"Yeah right," Draco relied with a laugh.

"What the...?" Harry gasped out as he was distracted and looked up.

So did the people around him. About twenty ghosts had just streamed through the back wall. Pearly-white and slightly transparent, they glided across the room talking to each other and hardly glancing at the first-years. They seemed to be arguing. What looked like a fat little monk was saying, "Forgive and forget, I say, we ought to give him a second chance –"

"My dear Friar, haven't we given Peeves all the chances he deserves? He gives us all a bad name and you know, he's not really even a ghost – I say, what are you all doing here?"

A ghost wearing a ruff and tights had suddenly noticed the first-years.

Nobody answered.

"New students!" said the Fat Friar, smiling around at them. "About to be sorted, I suppose?"

A few people nodded mutely.

"Hope to see you in Hufflepuff" said the Friar. "My old house, you know."

"Move along now," said a sharp voice. "The Sorting Ceremony's about to start."

Professor McGonagall had returned. One by one, the ghosts floated away through the opposite wall.

"Now, form a line," Professor McGonagall told the first-years, "and follow me."

Feeling oddly as though his legs had turned to lead, Harry got into line behind Susan, with Daphne behind him, and they walked out of

the chamber, back across the hall and through a pair of double doors into the Great Hall.

Harry had never even imagined such a strange and splendid place. It was lit by thousands and thousands of candles which were floating in mid-air over four long tables, where the rest of the students were sitting. These tables were laid with glittering golden plates and goblets. At the top of the Hall was another long table where the teachers were sitting. Professor McGonagall led the first-years up here, so that they came to a halt in a line facing the other students, with the teachers behind them. The hundreds of faces staring at them looked like pale lanterns in the flickering candlelight. Dotted here and there among the students, the ghosts shone misty silver. Mainly to avoid all the staring eyes, Harry looked upwards and saw a velvety black ceiling dotted with stars. He heard Hermione whisper, "It's bewitched to look like the sky outside, I read about it in *Hogwarts: A History*."

"So did I," Harry replied as he looked up at the night sky.

It was hard to believe there was a ceiling there at all, and that the Great Hall didn't simply open on to the heavens.

Harry quickly looked down again as Professor McGonagall silently placed a four-legged stool in front of the first-years. On top of the stool she put a pointed wizard's hat. This hat was patched and frayed and extremely dirty. Harry thoughtfully looked at the hat and shivered at the thought of how many kids had worn it. 'Hope they wash the damn thing. Would hate to get head lice,' he thought as he looked around the hall and noticed that everyone was now staring at the hat, he stared at it too. For a few seconds, there was complete silence. Then the hat twitched. A rip near the brim opened wide like a mouth – and the hat began to sing:

"Oh, you may not think I'm pretty,

But don't judge on what you see,

I'll eat myself if you can find

A smarter hat than me.

You can keep your bowlers black,

Your top hats sleek and tall,
For I'm the Hogwarts Sorting Hat
And I can cap them all.
There's nothing hidden in your head
The Sorting Hat can't see,
So try me on and I will tell you
Where you ought to be.
You might belong in Gryffindor,
Where dwell the brave at heart,
Their daring, nerve and chivalry
Set Gryffindor's apart;
You might belong in Hufflepuff,
Where they are just and loyal,
Those patient Hufflepuff's are true
And unafraid of toil;
Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw,
If you've a ready mind,
Where those of wit and learning,
Will always find their kind;
Or perhaps in Slytherin
You'll make your real friends,

Those cunning folk use any means

To achieve their ends.

So put me on! Don't be afraid!

And don't get in a flap!

You're in safe hands (though I have none)

For I'm a Thinking Cap!"

The whole Hall burst into applause as the hat finished its song. It bowed to each of the four tables and then became quite still again.

"So we've just got to try on the hat!" Ron whispered to the boy who had asked in the small room. "I'll kill Fred, he was going on about wrestling a troll."

"I told you so," Harry replied with a smirk.

"Git!" Ron muttered.

Professor McGonagall now stepped forward holding a long roll of parchment.

"When I call your name, you will put on the hat and sit on the stool to be sorted," she said. "Abbott, Hannah!"

Harry watched Hannah stumbled out of line, put on the hat, which fell right down over her eyes, and sat down. A moment's pause –

"HUFFLEPUFF!" shouted the hat.

The table on the right cheered and clapped as Hannah went to sit down at the Hufflepuff table. Harry saw the ghost of the Fat Friar waving merrily at her.

"Bones, Susan!"

"HUFFLEPUFF!" shouted the hat again, and Susan scuttled off to sit next to Hannah.

"Boot, Terry!"

"RAVENCLAW!"

The table second from the left clapped this time; several Ravenclaws stood up to shake hands with Terry as he joined them.

"Brocklehurst, Mandy" went to Ravenclaw too, but "Brown, Lavender" became the first new Gryffindor and the table on the far left exploded with cheers; Harry could see Ron's twin brothers catcalling.

"Bulstrode, Millicent" then became a Slytherin. Perhaps it was Harry's imagination, after all he'd heard about Slytherin, but he thought they looked an unpleasant lot.

He was starting to feel definitely sick now. He remembered being picked for teams during sports lessons at his old school. He had always been last to be chosen, not because he was no good, but because no one wanted Dudley to think they liked him.

"Finch-Fletchley, Justin!"

"HUFFLEPUFF!"

Sometimes, Harry noticed, the hat shouted out the house at once, but at others it took a little while to decide. "Finnigan, Seamus", the sandy-haired boy next to Harry in the line, sat on the stool for almost a whole minute before the hat declared him a Gryffindor.

"Granger, Hermione!"

Hermione almost ran to the stool and jammed the hat eagerly on her head.

"RAVENCLAW!" shouted the hat.

A horrible thought struck Harry, as horrible thoughts always do when you're very nervous. What if he wasn't chosen at all? What if he just sat there with the hat over his eyes for ages, until Professor McGonagall jerked it off his head and said there had obviously been a mistake and he'd better get back on the train?

When Neville Longbottom, the boy who kept losing his toad, was called, he fell over on his way to the stool. The hat took a long time to decide with Neville. When it finally shouted "HUFFLEPUFF", Neville ran off still wearing it, and had to jog back amid gales of laughter to give it to "MacDougal, Morag".

Malfoy swaggered forward when his name was called and Harry got his wish at once: the hat had barely touched his head when it screamed, "GRYFFINDOR!"

Malfoy screamed as he pulled the hat off and stared at it.

"My father..."

"Boy that is sick!" the hat replied, and then said, "Headmaster, notify the aurors that young mister Malfoy has been sexually abused by his father! Draco, I put you in Gryffindor because you were brave to come out on your sexual orientation."

"I..."

"Go to your table Mister Malfoy, I'm sure the Headmaster will want to see you after dinner," McGonagall ordered as she gently turned the boy towards the Gryffindor table.

Harry watched with a smirk as Draco stumbled to the table and sat down where he was patted on the back. 'One down,' he thought.

There weren't many people left now.

"Moon"... "Nott"... "Parkinson"... then a pair of twin girls, "Patil" and "Patil"... then "Perks, Sally-Anne"... and then, at last –

"Potter, Harry!"

As Harry stepped forward, whispers suddenly broke out like little hissing fires all over the hall.

"Potter, did she say?"

"The Harry Potter?"

The last thing Harry saw before the hat dropped over his eyes was the Hall full of people craning to get a good look at him. Next second he was looking at the black inside of the hat. He waited.

"Hmm," said a small voice in his ear. "So you're the instigator of young Mister Malfoy. A prank that matches the great marauders, and one who was your father but I see you know that. Now let's see here, you're difficult. Very difficult. Plenty of courage, I see. Not a bad mind, either. There's talent, oh my goodness, yes – and a nice thirst to prove yourself, now that's interesting... So where shall I put you?"

Harry gripped the edges of the stool and thought, "Not Slytherin, not Slytherin. Put me in Hufflepuff with my friends."

"Not Slytherin, eh?" said the small voice. "Are you sure? You could be great, you know, it's all here in your head, and Slytherin will help you on the way to greatness, no doubt about that – no? Well, if you're sure that's what you want– better be HUFFLEPUFF!"

"Put Weasley in Slytherin. I know you saw in my memories on how he acted on the train, if that's not a Slytherin then I don't know what is," Harry thought just as the hat shouted the last word to the whole Hall. He took off the hat and walked shakily towards the Hufflepuff table. He was so relieved to have been chosen and not put in Slytherin or Gryffindor; he hardly noticed that he was getting the loudest cheer yet.

He could see the High Table properly now. His eyes wandered to the end of the table where Hagrid was sitting. He caught his eye and gave him the thumbs-up. Harry grinned back. And there, in the centre of the High Table, in a large gold chair, sat Albus Dumbledore. Harry recognized him at once from the card he'd got out of the Chocolate Frog on the train. Dumbledore's silver hair was the only thing in the whole Hall that shone as brightly as the ghosts. He did notice the look he was getting from the headmaster, and it wasn't a pleasant look. Harry spotted Professor Quirrell, too, the nervous young man from the Leaky Cauldron. He was looking very peculiar in a large purple turban.

And now there were only three people left to be sorted. "Turpin, Lisa" became a Ravenclaw and then it was Ron's turn. He was pale

green by now. Harry crossed his fingers under the table and a second later the hat had shouted, "SLYTHERIN!"

Harry giggled as Ron yanked the hat and stared at it in horror.

"WHAT!" Percy Weasley shouted from the Gryffindor table as Ron stood there.

"Oh shut up you ponce! If I hadn't been influenced by someone you'd have been in that house too!" the hat shouted back.

Professor McGonagall gave Ron a slight push and he stumbled to the Slytherin table and sat down as another boy sat down on the stool, "Zabini, Blaise" was made a Slytherin. Professor McGonagall rolled up her scroll and took the Sorting Hat away.

Harry looked down at his empty gold plate. He had only just realized how hungry he was. The pumpkin pasties seemed ages ago.

"You sly dog you. You told the hat to put him there," Neville whispered.

"Damn right I did. You heard what he said on the train. If that's not Slytherin, then I don't know what is," Harry replied as he looked at the head table.

Albus Dumbledore had got to his feet. He was beaming at the students, his arms opened wide, as if nothing could have pleased him more than to see them all there.

"Welcome!" he said. "Welcome to a new year at Hogwarts! Before we begin our banquet, I would like to say a few words. And here they are: Nitwit! Blubber! Oddment! Tweak!"

"Thank you!"

"Now that was weird," Harry said and Susan, Neville and Hanna agreed.

Everyone at the table started filling their plates. Harry was amazed by the different types of food. He filled a glass with milk; he had tried the pumpkin juice at Susan's and didn't care for it.

"Hi Harry, names Cedric, you should try some pumpkin juice. Hogwarts makes the best," the boy said.

"Hello Cedric," Harry replied as he shook his hand, "I don't like pumpkin juice. Tried it at Susan's house and didn't care for it."

"It's your choice," Cedric replied and went back to eating. Forty minutes later, Harry pushed his plate away and sighed in content.

"Full, Harry?" Susan asked.

"Yes, that was fantastic. Not as good as Lipsy, but good," he replied as he wiped his mouth.

"I know, Lipsy is a great cook," Susan said as she pushed her plate away as well.

Dumbledore sat and watched Harry eating at the Hufflepuff table. He was furious that Harry was wearing the Potter crest on his robes and that he looked healthy. He couldn't figure out what had happened to the malnourished boy he had seen two years before when he did a spot check on the Dursleys to see if they were abusing him the way he had ordered. Even his glasses were gone and he figured the boy was wearing those new contacts that were coming out in the muggle world.

'I must go and talk with them and find out what the hell was going on. A healthy Harry Potter wouldn't do in his plans for him to control,' he thought as he set his cup down and turned to Pomfrey as she asked him something he had missed in why his thoughts were blazing.

Harry, starting to feel warm and sleepy from all the good food they'd eaten and looked at his watch. It was almost nine and he wondered when they'd be released to go to bed. Looking up at the High Table again. Hagrid was drinking deeply from his goblet. Professor McGonagall was talking to Professor Dumbledore. Professor Quirrell, in his absurd turban, was talking to a teacher with greasy black hair, a hooked nose and sallow skin.

The hook-nosed teacher looked past Quarrel's turban straight into Harry's eyes – and Harry grinned as he felt the invasion. With a thought, he said, 'Welcome to hell asshole!'

Harry retreated into his mindscape and watched as the dark-haired man advanced across the barren field to the large ruined spacecraft, his cloak billowing out like batwings. Following the man while invisible, he watched as the man entered the ship through the hull and into a darkened passageway. Turning, Harry appeared in the command center. The monitors were on, and it showed the man pull his wand out. Picking up the microphone he waited.

"Lumos!" he said and the tip of his wand lit up.

Harry wanted to chuckle, but didn't because he knew the light would draw them.

"Who are you?" Harry asked through the speaker system.

"Where are you, Potter!" Snape snarled as something moved in the darkness.

"Here, there, everywhere," Harry replied, and asked again, "What is your name, batty?"

Harry watched as the man turned around as a bulkhead door slammed closed.

"Let me out of here!" the man snarled.

"What is your name?" Harry asked for the third time. His finger's flew over the keyboard and several doors opened and several of the guard were released. He watched them on the monitor as they moved through the passageways clinging to the roof and walls of the ruined ship.

"Professor Snape, now release me!" he snarled.

Snape heard a noise behind him and he turned around as a pitch black creature lunged out at him. Its mouth opened showing its teeth; it grabbed him and picked him up. With extreme strength, it slammed him against the wall and a second set of teeth shot out of its mouth and snapped closed over his throat.

Harry watched at the head table as Professor Snape went flying backwards and landed in a heap. Professor Dumbledore was the

first to reach him and started to check on him when an older witch knelt beside them and started casting spells on Snape.

Everyone in the hall watched as the witch levitated Professor Snape and left the hall with him. Headmaster Dumbledore went to the head table and tapped his wand against a glass.

"Ahem – just a few more words now we are all fed and watered. I have a few start-of-term notices to give you.

"It seems Professor Snape has had a seizure, but I'm sure he'll be up by tomorrow morning.

"Now first-years should note that the forest in the grounds is forbidden to all pupils. And a few of our older students would do well to remember that as well."

Dumbledore's twinkling eyes flashed in the direction of the Weasley twins.

"I have also been asked by Mr. Filch, the caretaker, to remind you all that no magic should be used between classes in the corridors.

"Quidditch trials will be held in the second week of term. Anyone interested in playing for their house teams should contact Madam Hooch.

"And finally, I must tell you that this year; the third-floor corridor on the right-hand side is out of bounds to everyone who does not wish to die a very painful death."

Harry laughed, but he was one of the few who did.

"He's not serious?" he muttered to Cedric.

"Must be," said Cedric, frowning at Dumbledore. "It's odd, because he usually gives us a reason why we're not allowed to go somewhere – the forest's full of dangerous beasts, everyone knows that. I do think he might have told us Prefects, at least."

"And now, before we go to bed, let us sing the school song!" cried Dumbledore. Harry noticed that the other teachers' smiles had become rather fixed.

Dumbledore gave his wand a little flick as if he was trying to get a fly off the end and a long golden ribbon flew out of it, which rose high above the tables and twisted itself snake-like into words.

"Everyone pick their favourite tune," said Dumbledore, "and off we go!"

And the school bellowed:

"Hogwarts, Hogwarts, Hoggy Warty Hogwarts,

Teach us something please,

Whether we be old and bald

Or young with scabby knees,

Our heads could do with filling

With some interesting stuff,

For now they're bare and full of air,

Dead flies and bits of fluff,

So teach us things worth knowing,

Bring back what we've forgot,

Just do your best, we'll do the rest,

And learn until our brains all rot."

Everybody finished the song at different times. At last, only the Weasley twins from the Gryffindor table were left singing along to a very slow funeral march. Dumbledore conducted their last few lines with his wand, and when they had finished, he was one of those who clapped loudest.

"Ah, music," he said, wiping his eyes. "A magic beyond all we do here! And now, bedtime. Off you trot!"

The Hufflepuff first-years followed Cedric through the chattering crowds, out of the Great Hall and up the marble staircase.

Harry's legs were like lead again, but only because he was so tired and full of food. He was too sleepy even to be surprised that the people in the portraits along the corridors whispered and pointed as they passed, or that twice Cedric led them through doorways hidden behind sliding panels and hanging tapestries. They climbed more staircases, yawning and dragging their feet, and Harry was just wondering how much further they had to go when they came to a sudden halt.

"You want to watch out for the poltergeist Peeves," Cedric said as they came to a stop at wall with a picture of a beautiful woman sitting in a chair surrounded by plants. "The Bloody Baron's the only one who can control him, he won't even listen to us Prefects. Here we are."

"Password?" the woman asked.

"Lady Hufflepuff, I introduce you to the new first years. Everyone, this is Lady Hufflepuff, our house founder. Now she is going to hold up a plant, and ask you its name," Cedric said.

"Hello fellow Puffs," she said and reached into the many plants and pulled out a potted plant. She held up a plant, and asked, "Now what is this plant?"

"That is the mandrake plant," Cedric replied.

"Correct," and the portrait swung forward to reveal a door in the wall. Cedric pushed the door open and they all scrambled through it and found themselves in the Hufflepuff common room, a cozy round room full of comfortable armchairs and several couches. Several doors led off the room.

Cedric directed the girls through one door to their dormitory and the boys through another. Walking down the hall, he stopped at the last door. "Now this hallway is yours, it leads to your bedrooms. Your name and your roommate's name are on the door. You and your roommate will be roommates for all seven years while you're here. Your bathroom is at the end of the hall. Use it every day before you

go to bed. Leave your laundry in your hamper and it will be cleaned and returned the next day. Any questions?"

Everyone replied 'No.' and Cedric opened the door.

The first years walked down the new hallway and Harry saw his name and Neville's on a door. Pushing the door open, Harry walked in and smiled. The room was a large enough for two of Dudley's old bedrooms. Two large four poster beds were in the room, one to each corner. On the walls were poster boards to hang things on like posters. Their trunks were at the foot of their beds with a pair of desks under the window that looked over the lake. Two wardrobes were on each side of the door with their names on them.

Too tired to talk much, they pulled on their pajamas and fell into bed.

Harry had eaten a bit too much, because he had a very strange dream. He was wearing Professor Quirrell's turban, which kept talking to him, telling him he must transfer to Slytherin at once, because it was his destiny. Harry told the turban he didn't want to be in Slytherin; it got heavier and heavier; he tried to pull it off but it tightened painfully – and there was Neville, laughing at him as he struggled with it – then Neville turned into the hooknosed teacher, Snape, whose laugh became high and cold – there was a burst of green light and Harry woke, sweating and shaking.

He rolled over and fell asleep again, and when he woke next day, he didn't remember the dream at all.

Chapter Four

Was that Snip or Snape

In the hospital ward, Dumbledore looked down at his friend, Severus Snape. "Poppy, will he be alright?" he asked

"Albus, I don't know. I need to know what happened to him first," Pomfrey replied as she ran her wand over her patient.

"All I have is minimum brain activity and these strange marks on his throat, what they are I don't know, Poppy said as she put her wand away.

"Well let me know when you find out," Albus asked as he walked out of the infirmary and went up to his office to think. One of things he had to think about was why the hat had disobeyed him and put Harry Potter, Neville Longbottom in Hufflepuff, Ron Weasley in Slytherin and Hermione Granger, Daphne Greengrass, Tracy Davis in Ravenclaw. He also knew he would have to deal with Lucius Malfoy in the morning.

ooOoOoo

Harry yawned and sat up, pulling his wand out he did a tempest spell which said it was 6:14 in the morning. With a stretch, he slid out of bed and went to his trunk and opened it. Pulling out clean clothes, he woke Neville and went and took a shower. Once finished they left the dorm room and went to the common room where Susan and Hannah joined them.

Harry sat down between Hannah and Susan for breakfast. Professor Sprout came by and handed out their class schedules while they ate. Ten minutes into breakfast, owls flooded into the room carrying letters to everyone. Owls landed in front of Harry, Susan and Hannah and they took the letters from the birds and handed them several slices of bacon before they left.

Harry put the letter away as a second owl swooped down and dropped his copy of the Daily Prophet on his plate. Opening it up, he started reading and was engrossed in the story about two men being caught breaking into a wizard house that was on the market for sale when all of a sudden screams started echoing through the hall.

"RONALD BILIUS WEASLEY. HOW COULD YOU BE PLACED IN THAT DISPECIABLE HOUSE? HEADMASTER, I DEMAND A RESORTING OF MY SON. HE IS NOT AN EVIL WIZARD! HE IS A SON OF THE LIGHT. NOW YOU BETTER RESORT HIM OR ELSE I'M...."

Harry was looking at Ron and noticed he was trying to shrink under the table as the letter screamed at him. Professor McGonagall was walking by and pointed her wand at the letter and it vanished as a green spell hit the screaming piece of parchment.

"Susan, I'm glad that bint isn't my mother," Harry replied as he set his schedule to the side and worked on his waffle.

"I agree. You know, I heard from Hermione that she was loudly asking what platform number it was to take to Hogwarts and she was looking around as if she was looking for someone..."

"Bet you a galleon it was me," Harry said as he grabbed his glass of milk and drained it.

"Well the way Ron acted on the train, I am sure it was," Susan replied with a smile and then asked, "Ready?"

"Yes, let's go get our bags now that we know what classes. Ready Hannah?" Harry asked as he stood up and picked up a half dozen apples to snack on and slipped them into his pockets of his robe.

ooOoOoo

Heading back to their dorms for their books Harry looked at the paintings on the wall. Some looked really old, and he noticed they seemed to be watching them as they walked. Back in his room, he grabbed his book bag, which Amelia had bought him, and slipped in the books he would need for the day's classes along with his pens, quills and ink. Dropping the apples into a side pocket he picked the bag up and headed for their first class of the day with Neville, Susan and Hannah. The first class was History of Magic and as they walked towards the class room, they heard the whispering coming from the students that stepped to the side for them.

"There, look."

"Where?"

"Next to those girls."

"Wearing those dark glasses?"

"Did you see his face?"

"Could you see his scar?"

People queuing outside classrooms stood on tiptoe to get a look at him, or doubled back to pass him in the corridors again, staring. Harry, Neville and the girls wished they wouldn't, because they were trying to concentrate on finding their way to class.

Harry finally had enough. With the girls beside him and Neville at his back he turned on the kids and snarled in anger, "Look, stop it. I am here just like all of you to learn. I am NOT an animal exhibit at a zoo to be stared at. Get a life people, yes I supposedly defeated Voldemort..." everyone flinched at him saying the name, and he continued, "good god people it's a name. It cannot hurt you, hell none of you were around when he was alive. You shouldn't have anything to fear from the SOB, he's dead. Dead not by me, but by my mother, yes my mother killed him not me. Unless you think a one year old baby killed him. I think she did it, and somehow I got hit with a spell that injured me. Now grow up, and go to class and leave me the hell alone!"

"Harry, language," Hermione said as she walked up.

"Sorry Hermione, but everyone has been staring at me and I hate it," Harry replied as he pushed through the gawkers and walked away.

"Harry, we know," Daphne said and gave him a hug which was followed by the twins and Tracy.

The girls followed Harry, forming a protective ring around him as they walked to History of Magic. Stepping into the room, they went to the front of the class and sat down. They were surprised when a ghost came through the wall and started roll call. Once finished, he started droning on about goblin wars. Harry sat next to Daphne writing notes. Harry smirked and pulled out a bundle of self inking

auto dictating quills. Passing them out to his friends, they let the quills take notes as they whispered about the next class and pulled out their books and read ahead.

The bell chimed and everyone packed up as Professor Binns floated through the wall.

"Harry, that was a great idea on the quills," Daphne said with a smile.

"I thought so too, too bad we can't use them in all our classes," Susan added as she slipped her history book into her bag.

"Thanks, so what's next?" Harry asked.

"Charms with Professor Flitwick," Neville said as he yawned.

"Cool, let's go," Harry replied and they started out of the room.

Neville and Harry walked together chatting; not noticing the girls forming a wall around them. Arriving at the charms classroom, they took seats near the front as the rest of the two first year classes came in. Susan and Hanna sat on either side of Harry while the rest of the girls and Neville sat around them.

Professor Flitwick, the Charms teacher, was a tiny little wizard who had to stand on a pile of books to see over his desk. At the start of their first lesson he took the register, and when he reached Harry's name he gave an excited squeak and toppled out of sight.

Harry watched as Professor Flitwick climbed back onto the stack of books, Harry thought he seemed to radiate power and would have hated to fight him in a duel. Amelia had said he was a five time world champion dueler.

"Good morning children, I hope you're all as excited as I am?" he asked as he looked at the eager looking children.

"Yes, Master Flitwick," came the reply from the two houses.

"Good, today we're going to learn the colour charm. Now the colour charm can be used on anything but if I find it being used on anyone I will be very cross with you. Now the incantation is 'cherish cultivate' and the wand movement is a half twist of your wrist and a swish.

Now let's practice the hand movement while I pass out your targets." Flitwick said as he jumped down from the chair and started placing a single hardboiled egg in front of each of the children.

The charm was quickly mastered by Harry, and the girls but he noticed his best mate was having a hard time. Looking at the wand he noticed the nicks and dents in it and asked, "Neville, where did you get that wand?"

Neville blushed and replied, "It was my dad's. My gran made me bring it..."

"That won't do. Professor Flitwick, Neville has a problem. It seems that his grandmother is making him use his father's wand. But it's not working right for him. I remember Ollivander saying that the wand chooses the wizard or witch. Well, this wand is a poor match. He needs a new wand or he'll never meet his potential..."

"It's ok, my gran wants me to use his in his memory," Neville said with a blush.

"You're quite correct Mister Potter. Ten points to Hufflepuff for spotting a major problem. Mister Longbottom, you have a free period next. So I will fire call your grandmother and take you to Diagon Alley for a new wand. Your father's wand was perfect for him, but for you it's not so hang it on the wall and remember him that way," Professor Flitwick ordered.

"Yes, Sir. Should I stay here with you and wait while you talk with her?" Neville asked.

"Yes... No, go get lunch and then come back. I will also talk with Professor McGonagall and let her know that I'm taking you to Diagon Alley to get you a new wand. Now off with all of you and enjoy your lunch. I want a ten inch essay on the colour charm by next Monday," Professor Flitwick ordered.

"Yes, Professor," the kids replied and left the room for lunch.

Harry walked beside a sullen Neville. "Nev, what's wrong?" he asked.

With a sigh, he responded, "I was hoping my dad's wand would work for me..."

"As Professor Flitwick said, hang it on the wall with a plaque that says, 'My dad, courage under all. He will be avenged.'"

"You know about my parents?" Neville asked.

"Yes, Aunt Amelia told me about what happened to them. I'm sorry it happened, and wished they could be cured. Has your grandmother thought of trying the muggle way?"

"I don't think so. But then she really doesn't talk about it much... bloody hell!" Neville said as he spotted Draco and his father walking into the great hall. Neither looked very happy.

"I wonder what's going on," Harry asked.

"I don't know, lets hurry and get in there," Neville replied and they walked quickly to the great hall and over to their table.

"Dumbledore, I demand that you resort Draco into his proper house. Malfoys have always been in Slytherin and that's where he will be," Lucius Malfoy snarled as he came to a stop in front of the head table.

"I'm sorry Mister Malfoy, but that is quite impossible," Albus replied.

"You will do it or you will be removed."

"We can ask the hat, but I doubt it will do so," Albus said and with a wave of his right hand the hat appeared in front of him.

"What do you need headmaster?" the hat asked.

"Herman, we need you to resort Mister Malfoy," Albus said as he turned the hat around.

"No," the hat replied.

"You will or I'll have you thrown through the veil in the department of mysteries," Lucius snapped in anger.

"Hmmm, veil and no more sorting, that's a tough decision, but I guess I will check young Malfoy once again," the hat said.

Lucius picked the hat up and dropped it on his son's head.

"Slytherin!" the hat shouted and then giggled as it said, "A prank worthy of the Marauders!"

"What?" Lucius snapped out.

"Yes, I played a prank on your gay boy son. Now send him off to the correct house, he is such a slimy git," the hat replied and vanished.

Draco turned and strutted to the Slytherin table and sat between his two body guards.

"Well, guess that show's over," Harry replied as he started eating lunch.

"Yes it is, so you all going to be in the library after lunch?" Neville asked.

"That's the plan. The girls want to get our homework done," Harry said as he took a bite of his ham sandwich.

"Ok, then I'll see you there when I get back with Professor Flitwick," Neville replied as he stood up and grabbed a couple of bananas before walking to the door.

ooOoOoo

The afternoon went quickly by as they did their homework in the library. Hermione and Daphne went over Harry's essays and corrected the grammar and then helped him rewrite it on new parchment. Neville came in two hours after lunch excited about his new wand.

"What wand did you get Neville?" Hannah asked as she closed her charms book.

Neville pulled his wand out and said, "Its cherry and unicorn hair, eleven inches long. Quite swishy, or that's what Ollivander says."

"Did you get the wand holster like I suggested?" Tracy Davis asked.

"Yes, it's made from a Chinese firebolt and Professor Flitwick suggested I get the Auror cleaning kit so I did. I picked up some for everyone, and a few more to sell to the other kids," Neville relied with a grin.

Everyone laughed and then turned to help Neville with his homework.

Later that night, Harry went down into his trunk and pulled the family Grimoire off the stand and started reading more of his family history.

June 7th 1796

Jason and I are on our way to the new world. I leave this note for my family so they know that they know we have left on our own free will. Edward has taken a job in the new ministry being set up. I'm so happy that we're going. We have all our trunks packed, except for two that we're taking with us. The Vesper leaves London on the 12th of June and we should be in Boston no later than the 31st of July. The baby is due by late December and so it's a good time for us to leave. If all goes well, we shall be starting a new branch of the Edwards line there.

Adriana Edwards (nee Potter)

Flipping the page he continued to read.

December 27th 1796

Tonight we received an owl from America. Harold James Edwards and Ellen Marie Edwards were born on the 25th of December 1796 in Boston Massachusetts at one am. The pensive was adorable and I've placed and marked them in the library. We plan on sending them some toys and clothes. Adriana is doing ok and Jason is the head of his department in muggle relations.

Richard says he will take them over when he leaves in January. I will miss him, and the kids will as well. Richard is taking the Draught of Sight to James along with the directions to make the potion. I have included the potion in the potions Grimoire for the family. It's a good money maker for the family, cost is around 50 galleons each, but we can make at least a 100 galleons a dose.

Nellie Elizabeth Potter

"Harry you in there?" Neville shouted.

Closing the book, he set it back on the stand and went to the stairs.
"What's up Nev?" Harry asked.

"I thought you would like to know that bed check is in fifteen minutes.
You may want to hit the bathroom first."

"Thanks, I'll be right up," Harry replied as he turned the lights off and climbed the stairs.

"That is a brilliant trunk," Neville said as he watched Harry close the trunk and then reopen it to another compartment.

"Yes it is. My dad used to use it for his work on undercover assignments. The trunk is a seven compartment trunk. The first compartment is for clothes. The second is a potion storage room, and the third is for parchment and writing material and anything else. The fourth is the library with over five thousand books, and a master connection to all the Potter libraries. The fifth is a four bedroom apartment with five baths, a kitchen, study room, game room, exercise room, and a living room. The sixth room is a spell practice room which connects to the apartment as well as the seventh room. The seventh compartment is a jail with forty cells," Harry replied as he pulled out his pajamas and bathroom kit.

"Bloody awesome," Neville said as he went to his trunk and put his book bag inside and then climbed into bed.

ooOoOoo

Dumbledore was a troubled man. He sat staring out the window and at the great lake. The giant squid was tossing several merfolk up and out of the water so they could dive in when they hit. Turning he picked up the update on Professor Snape and sighed as he read the report.

"Herman, why did you disobey my orders?" Albus asked as he turned and looked at the hat.

"Albus, you may be the headmaster, but I'm the sorting hat. I sort; I put those kids where they belonged. If you cannot handle that, then its time you stepped down," the hat replied

"I need Potter and Longbottom in Gryffindor along with the Weasley boy. Now tomorrow, you will resort them," Albus ordered.

"No, and you cannot make me. If you try, I will not sort next year and Lady Hogwarts agrees with me. Now leave them alone. Now I do apologies for the prank I played on Malfoy, but then I don't like his father. Potter is loyal, just like Longbottom, so that's Hufflepuff. Granger, Greengrass, and Davis are Ravenclaw to the core. Weasley is so deceiving and sly that he is defiantly a Slytherin and if I could, I would have put Percy Weasley into Slytherin as well. Now good night," the hat replied and then closed its eyes and the tip folded down as snores started coming from the brim.

ooOoOoo

The next morning came quickly and they headed to their new class. Professor McGonagall was again different. Harry had been quite right to think she wasn't a teacher to cross. Strict and clever, she gave them a talking-to the moment they had sat down in her first class.

"Transfiguration is some of the most complex and dangerous magic you will learn at Hogwarts," she said. "Anyone messing around in my class will leave and not come back. You have been warned."

Then she changed her desk into a pig and back again. They were all very impressed and couldn't wait to get started, but soon realized they weren't going to be changing the furniture into animals for a long time. After making a lot of complicated notes, they were each given a match and started trying to turn it into a needle. By the end of the lesson, the girls, Neville and Harry had made their matches into needles. Harry went one further and transformed his from silver to gold which made Professor McGonagall smile as she gave each of them ten points.

"I want a fifteen inch essay on what you thought about your first transformation of a matchstick to a needle. Mister Potter, Longbottom. Miss. Greengrass, Bones, Davis, Patil's, and Granger

please stay after class. I wish to ask you something," Professor McGonagall said as the bell rang.

Harry put the rest of his notes away and then gathered with the girls as Neville picked up his bag and walked over.

"You wanted to see us Professor?" Harry asked.

"Yes, I want to know how you have all perfected the transfiguration spell so quickly," Minerva replied.

"We've been practicing every evening since we were sorted into our houses," Harry said and the girls nodded in agreement.

"But you're in two different houses, how can you all work together?" Minerva asked.

"We met on the train and made an agreement that no matter what house we were in, we would work together and be friends," Harry stated.

"I was only able to do it last night, but the girls and Harry were able to do it the night before," Neville added.

Minerva nodded her head and her eyes latched onto a ring on Harry's left hand and she said, "Mister Potter, please stay. The rest of you may go. If you practice, please have an older student watching over you in case you need medical help."

"We'll wait for you outside," Susan said as she walked out the door with Neville and the rest of the girls.

Harry stood there waiting as the door closed and then asked, "You wanted to talk to me?"

"Yes, Mister Potter. What is that ring on your finger?"

"That's my ring that proclaims me the Heir of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter," Harry replied.

"How did you get it? May I please see it?"

"It was in my vault and I cannot take it off but you can look at it if you want," Harry replied as he held up his hand.

Minerva leaned over and looked at the ring. Pulling her wand out, she cast a detection spell on it and found binding magic on the ring and Harry. "We need to have that ring removed, it could be a danger to you," she stated.

"No. This ring is mine and tells me my family is a Noble and Ancient house in the Wizard world. When I become of age, I will be given the head of house ring which will replace this one," Harry stated.

"And how do you know this?" she asked.

"Because the book titled, Ancient and Noble Houses of Britain told me so. It's an interesting read. May I go to dinner now?" Harry asked.

"Yes you may," Minerva replied and waved him to the door. Sitting down, she had to think on what she'd just learned.

ooOoOoo

Later that evening in the hospital ward, Professor Snape sat up in his bed and looked around. Confused he tried to figure out how he came to be in the hospital ward. Flinging his legs over the bed, he started to get up when Poppy came in and forced him to sit back down as she pulled her wand out and ran her scans. Snape scowled and started to say something but Poppy gave him a stern look so he sat there until the door opened and Albus came into the room.

"Severus my boy, what happened?" Albus asked.

"Merlin's hairy balls, I don't know. One minute I'm eating dinner, and watching the sorting. The next I'm running from creatures that I have no idea what or where they come from. All I know is magic barely worked on them. The killing spell bounced off them, the Crucio spell seemed to piss them off. What they did to those muggles, it was..." Severus said with a shudder. He stood up and walked towards the doors.

Albus frowned and followed his friend down to the dungeon and into his private quarters. He watched as Severus went to one of the

cabinets and opened it. He pulled out a square bottle, uncorked it and drank directly from the bottle.

"Should you be doing that?" Albus asked.

Setting the bottle down, Severus patted his stomach and belched flames before answering, "Yes. Now leave me alone," he ordered as he shivered in fear.

Albus walked out the door and headed for his office and his pensieve. He had to figure out what happened to his friend.

ooOoOoo

Severus stood in the corner shrouded in darkness as he watched his first class of the new year come in. He scanned through the scroll of names, looking for any of interest. One of the Ravenclaws was the son of a woman he had killed under He-who-must-not-be-named orders. The memory of her capture and torture reminded him of happy times. With a feral grin, he remembered how she had died under his 'Crucio' curse. Several others were prominent neutrals during the war. Looking at Greengrass and Davis as they walked in and sat down, he slowly licked his lips and imagined them under his control. The Hufflepuffs included the niece of the current Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. Not to mention, of course, the famous Boy-Who-Lived and the squib Longbottom.

Using his wand, he slammed the door, and stepped out of the shadows, "Sit down, now!"

Everyone scattered for seats. Harry dropped down next to Neville and the girls were on his left and behind him.

Snape, like Flitwick, started the class by taking the register, and like Flitwick, he paused at Harry's name.

"Ah, yes," he said softly, "Harry Potter. Our new – celebrity."

Snape finished calling the names and looked up at the class. His eyes were black like Hagrid's, but they had none of Hagrid's warmth. They were cold and empty and made you think of dark tunnels.

"You are here to learn the subtle science and exact art of potion-making," he began. He spoke in barely more than a whisper, but they caught every word... like Professor McGonagall, Snape had the gift of keeping a class silent without effort.

"As there is little foolish wand-waving here, many of you will hardly believe this is magic. I don't expect you will really understand the beauty of the softly simmering cauldron with its shimmering fumes, the delicate power of liquids that creep through human veins, bewitching the mind, ensnaring the senses... I can teach you how to bottle fame, brew glory, even stopper death... if you aren't as big a bunch of dunderheads as I usually have to teach."

More silence followed this little speech. Harry and Neville exchanged looks with raised eyebrows. Hermione Granger was on the edge of her seat and looked desperate to start proving that she wasn't a dunderhead.

"Potter!" Snape said suddenly. "What would I get if I added powdered root of asphodel to an infusion of wormwood?"

Powdered root of what to an infusion of what? That wasn't in the first year book, Harry thought with a quick glance at Neville, who looked as stumped as he was; Hermione's hand had shot into the air.

"Sir, I don't know, it's not in the first year book. Can you tell me what year it is, and I will write up a report on it for you, sir," Harry replied as he looked up at the man.

Snape's lips curled into a sneer.

"Tut, tut... fame clearly isn't everything."

He ignored Hermione's hand.

"I have no idea what fame you're talking about, Sir. But I will find out if you want me too?" Harry said with a smile.

With a growl, Snape snapped, "Let's try again. Potter, where would you look if I told you to find me a bezoar?"

Hermione stretched her hand as high into the air as it would go without her leaving her seat, but Harry knew what a bezoar was.

"Sir, a Bezoar is a shriveled, kidney like 'stone' that comes from the stomach of a goat. It will protect you from most poisons, sir."

"Thought you wouldn't open a book before coming, eh, Potter?"

"Sir, he answered your question," Daphne replied.

Snape looked at the girl and back at the boy as he thought of his answer and knew she was right.

Harry forced himself to keep looking straight into those cold eyes. He was glad Susan had him study hard out of One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi?

Snape was still ignoring Hermione's quivering hand.

With a growl he asked, "What is the difference, Potter, between monkshood and wolfsbane? Quickly!"

At this, Hermione stood up, her hand stretching towards the dungeon ceiling.

"Sir, my mother wrote about those. They are the same plant, and the muggles call it aconite, leopard's bane, women's bane, Devil's helmet or blue rocket," Harry replied with a smirk and then added, "My aunt likes the flowers and has them in her garden."

A few people laughed; Harry caught Daphne's eye and she winked. Snape, however, was not pleased.

"Sit down," he snapped at Hermione. "Why aren't you all copying this down?"

There was a sudden rummaging for quills and parchment. Over the noise, Snape said, "And ten points will be taken from Hufflepuffs house for your cheek, Potter."

Things didn't improve for the Hufflepuffs as the Potions lesson continued. Snape put them all into pairs and set them to mixing up a simple potion to cure boils. He swept around in his long black cloak, watching them weigh dried nettles and crush snake fangs, criticizing almost everyone. He was just telling everyone to look at the perfect

way Daphne had stewed hers when Harry stopped Neville from making a major mistake.

"What is going on here?" Snape snarled as he appeared behind Harry and Neville.

"Nothing, Sir. I was just warning Neville he was about to make a mistake and he thanked me for helping him..."

"Are you a teacher now, Potter?" Snape sneered as he looked at Neville who gulped.

"No, Sir. But I didn't want to get hurt, so I warned him..."

"That's another ten points you've lost for Hufflepuffs," and walked away.

This was so unfair that Harry opened his mouth to argue, but Neville kicked him behind their cauldron.

"Don't push it," he muttered. "I've heard Snape can turn very nasty."

"Let him," Harry replied and stood up, "Sir, I think that is wrong, and I demand an apology."

Snape swung around and snarled, "Detention, Potter. Tonight and that will be another fifty points from Hufflepuff."

"You, Sir are not a teacher. You're a bully and to think my mother considered you a friend," Harry snapped as he stuffed his belongings into his shoulder bag.

Both classes gasped out in surprise.

"Everyone turn your potions in and get out. All of you get out!" Snape screamed.

Everyone quickly bottled their potions in and gathered their belongings.

As they climbed the steps out of the dungeon an hour later, Harry's mind was racing with anger as a letter started forming in his mind. He'd lost seventy points for Hufflepuff in his very first week – why did

Snape hate him so much? He didn't know why, but he was determined to find out. First he had to send a letter and a pensive memory to Aunt Amelia after he saw Professor Sprout which he dreaded.

Chapter Five

Draco the Idiot

At five to three Harry led Neville, Susan, Hannah, Padma, Parvati, Daphne, Tracy and Hermione they left the castle and made their way across the grounds. Hagrid lived in a small wooden house on the edge of the Forbidden Forest. A crossbow and a pair of galoshes were outside the front door. Stopping at the door, Harry knocked.

When Harry knocked they heard a frantic scrabbling from inside and several booming barks. Then Hagrid's voice rang out, saying, "Back, Fang – back."

Hagrid's big hairy face appeared in the crack as he pulled the door open.

"Hang on," he said. "Back, Fang."

He let them in, struggling to keep a hold on the collar of an enormous black boarhound.

"That's a Neapolitan Mastiff, I've read about them..."

"Nay, this is boarhound, and a ruddy coward at that," Hagrid said as he patted the giant dogs head.

"Are you sure? I am positive they are part of the Mastiff family," Hermione stated.

"Ye'h I'm s're, my da used to raise them. Come in and have a seat," Hagrid ordered as he pulled the dog to the back of the room.

There was only one room inside the hut. Everywhere they looked there were hams and pheasants hanging from the ceiling, a giant copper kettle was boiling on the open fire and in one corner stood a massive bed with a patchwork quilt over it with a small end table holding a picture of a dragon breathing flames.

"Make yerselves at home," Hagrid said as he let go of Fang, who bounded straight at Neville. Neville fainted as the large dog neared him. Everyone started chucking as the dog started licking Neville's

face and ears. They realized that like Hagrid, Fang was clearly not as fierce as he looked. Harry helped Neville up and into one of the chairs around the table.

"Hagrid, these are my friends. This is Neville Longbottom, Hermione Granger, Daphne Greengrass, Tracy Davis, Susan Bones, Padma and Parvati Patil, and Hannah Abbot," Harry told Hagrid as he pointed to each of them. Hagrid nodded his head as he was pouring boiling water into a large teapot and putting rock cakes on to a plate.

"Sit down everyone, and I know a lot of those names from being here at Hogwarts, but where is your friend Ron Weasley," Hagrid asked as he looked at Harry.

Harry almost choked on his sip of tea as he looked at his first friend, "Ron Weasley is not my friend. He is a lying sneaking backstabbing SOB that wanted to be my friend to get my money," Harry replied as he picked up a rock cake.

The look of confusion on Hagrid's face told Harry he was supposed to be set up to be friends with the git. Shaking his head, he picked up one of the cakes and took a bit of it. He swore that it almost broke his teeth, but Harry and everyone pretended to be enjoying them as they told Hagrid all about their first lessons and how well they had done in Charms and Transfiguration. Fang rested his head on Harry's knee and drooled all over his robes as he fed the dog his rock cake.

Everyone was delighted to hear Hagrid call Filch 'that old git'.

"An' as fer that cat, Mrs, Norris, I'd really like ter introduce her to Fang some time..." Hagrid stopped as the kids started laughing and then continued, "D'yeh know, every time I go up ter the school, she follows me everywhere? Can't get rid of her... it's like she's put up to it by Filch."

Harry told Hagrid about Snape's lesson. Hagrid, told Harry not to worry about it, that Snape liked hardly any of the students.

"Hagrid, you don't understand, he seems to really hate me."

"Rubbish!" said Hagrid. "Why should he?"

"Harry is right, Sir. He went after Harry with a vengeance. Asking questions from seventh year newt classes that none of us knew," interrupted Daphne.

Yet Harry couldn't help thinking that Hagrid didn't quite meet his eyes when Daphne said that.

Harry picked up a piece of paper that was lying on the table under the tea cosy. It was a cutting from the Daily Prophet:

GRINGOTTS BREAK-IN LATEST

Investigations continue into the break-in at Gringotts on 31 July, widely believed to be the work of dark wizards or witches unknown.

Gringotts' goblins today insisted that nothing had been taken. The vault that was searched had in fact been emptied the same day.

'But we're not telling you what was in there, so keep your noses out if you know what's good for you,' said a Gringotts spokes goblin this afternoon.

Harry remembered Susan telling him on the train that someone had tried to rob Gringotts, but Susan hadn't mentioned the date.

"Hagrid!" said Harry. "That Gringotts break-in happened on my birthday! It might've been happening while we were there!"

There was no doubt about it, Hagrid definitely didn't meet Harry's eyes this time. He grunted and offered him another rock cake. Harry read the story again. The vault that was searched had in fact been emptied earlier that same day. Hagrid had emptied vault seven hundred and thirteen, if you could call it emptying, taking out that grubby little package. Had that been what the thieves were looking for?

As everyone walked back to the castle for dinner, their pockets weighed down with rock cakes they'd been too polite to refuse, Harry thought that none of the lessons he'd had so far had given him as much to think about as tea with Hagrid. Had Hagrid collected that package just in time? Where was it now? And did Hagrid know something about Snape that he didn't want to tell Harry?

ooOoOoo

Harry had never believed he would meet a boy he hated more than Dudley, but that was before he met Draco Malfoy and Ron Weasley on the train. Still, first-year Hufflepuffs were lucky they didn't have any classes with the Slytherins, so they didn't have to put up with Malfoy or Weasley much. Or at least, they didn't until they spotted a notice pinned up in the Hufflepuff common room which made them all groan. Flying lessons would be starting on Thursday – and Hufflepuff and Slytherin would be learning together.

"Typical," said Harry darkly. "Just what I always wanted to do was make a fool of myself on a broomstick in front of Malfoy and Weasley."

He had been looking forward to learn more about flying than anything else.

"Harry, you won't make a fool of yourself," said Susan reasonably. "Hannah and I taught you ourselves. Anyway, I heard Malfoy's always going on about how good he is at Quidditch, but I bet that's all talk."

Malfoy certainly did talk about flying a lot. He complained loudly about first-years never getting in the house Quidditch teams and told long, boastful stories which always seemed to end with him narrowly escaping Muggles in helicopters. He wasn't the only one, though: the way Ron Weasley told it, he'd spent most of his childhood zooming around the countryside on his broomstick playing Quidditch with his family. Weasley even told anyone who'd listen about the time he'd almost hit a hang-glider on his brother's old broom. Everyone from wizarding families talked about Quidditch constantly. Harry couldn't figure out what the big deal was about chasing a ball around on a broom.

Neville had never been on a broomstick in his life, because his grandmother had never let him near one. Privately, Harry felt she'd had good reason, because Neville managed to have an extraordinary number of accidents even with both feet on the ground. Even though he had a new wand and was better at spells, he was clumsy.

Hermione Granger was almost as nervous about flying as Neville was. This was something you couldn't learn by heart out of a book – not that she hadn't tried. At breakfast on Thursday she bored them all stupid with flying tips she'd got out of a library book called Quidditch through the Ages. Neville was hanging on to her every word, desperate for anything that might help him hang on to his broomstick later, but everybody else was very pleased when Hermione's lecture was interrupted by the arrival of the post.

Harry watched as Hedwig spiraled down to him and landed on the table. Taking the letter from her, he handed her a slice of bacon. Malfoy's eagleowl was always bringing him packages of sweets from home, which he opened gloatingly at the Slytherin table.

A barn owl brought Neville a small package from his grandmother. He opened it excitedly and showed them a glass ball the size of a large marble, which seemed to be full of white smoke.

"It's a Remembrall!" he explained. "Gran knows I forget things – this tells you if there's something you've forgotten to do. Look, you hold it tight like this and if it turns red – oh..." His face fell, because the Remembrall had suddenly glowed scarlet, '... you've forgotten something..."

Neville was trying to remember what he'd forgotten when Draco Malfoy, who was passing the Hufflepuff table, snatched the Remembrall out of his hand.

Harry and Neville jumped to their feet. They were half hoping for a reason to fight Malfoy, but Professor McGonagall, who could spot trouble quicker than any teacher in the school, was there in a flash.

"What's going on?"

"Malfoy's got my Remembrall, Professor."

Scowling, Malfoy quickly dropped the Remembrall back on the table.

"Just looking," he said, and he sloped away with Crabbe and Goyle behind him.

"Taking things without asking Malfoy is called stealing, but then I've heard you have a kleptomania addiction from listening in on your housemates talk.

Draco's cheeks turned pink as he stormed away.

At three-thirty that afternoon, Harry, Neville and the other Hufflepuffs hurried down the front steps into the grounds for their first flying lesson. It was a clear, breezy day and the grass rippled under their feet as they marched down the sloping lawns towards a smooth lawn on the opposite side of the grounds to the Forbidden Forest, whose trees were swaying darkly in the distance.

The Slytherins were already there, and so were twenty broomsticks lying in neat lines on the ground. Harry had heard Fred and George Weasley complain about the school brooms, saying that some of them started to vibrate if you flew too high, or always flew slightly to the left.

Their teacher, Madam Hooch, arrived. She had short, grey hair and yellow eyes like a hawk.

"Well, what are you all waiting for?" she barked. "Everyone stand by a broomstick. Come on, hurry up."

Harry glanced down at his broom. It was old and some of the twigs stuck out at odd angles.

"Stick out your right hand over your broom," called Madam Hooch at the front, 'and say, "Up!"

"UP!" everyone shouted.

Harry's broom jumped into his hand just like Susan had taught him, but it was one of the few that did. Hermione Granger's had simply rolled over on the ground and Neville's hadn't moved at all. Perhaps brooms, like horses, could tell when you were afraid, thought Harry; there was a quaver in Neville's voice that said only too clearly that he wanted to keep his feet on the ground.

Madam Hooch then showed them how to mount their brooms without sliding off the end, and walked up and down the rows,

correcting their grips. Harry and Neville were delighted when she told Malfoy he'd been doing it wrong for years.

"Now, when I blow my whistle, you kick off from the ground, hard," said Madam Hooch. "Keep your brooms steady, rise a few feet and then come straight back down by leaning forwards slightly. On my whistle – three – two –"

But Neville, nervous and jumpy and frightened of being left on the ground, pushed off hard before the whistle had touched Madam Hooch's lips.

They were flying around in lazy circles when Draco tried to knock Hermione off her broom. Harry blocked him and he flew away. "Keep it up Draco and you're going to wish you were never born!" Harry snarled in anger.

"Like you could hurt me," Draco replied.

Harry started to turn towards the boy again when he flew away. Turning back to his friend, he asked, "Are you ok?"

"Yes, but I think I want to go down," Hermione said with a whiteness to her face that could rival a ghost.

Harry guided his friend down and saw that Neville was still having trouble with his broom and Madam Hooch was helping him.

"Come back, boy! No one else move!" she shouted, but Neville was rising straight up like a cork shot out of a bottle – twelve feet – twenty feet. Harry saw his scared white face look down at the ground falling away, saw him gasp; slip sideways off the broom and Harry kicked off after his friend and went straight up. His right hand latched onto Neville's robes as he started past him. With a yank, Neville came up and over the handle of the broom where his belly landed on the handle.

The combined weight of the two of them made the broom drop. The broomstick snapped when the brush part hit first and the handle was trying to keep them in the air. The handle bent and snapped as the boys weight continued on and they hit the grass. Both cried out at the impact.

Madam Hooch ran over and was bending over them, her face as white as a ghost.

"You two are so lucky," Harry heard her mutter. "Stand up, and let me get you up to the hospital wing to check you over."

She turned to the rest of the class.

"None of you is to move while I take these boys to the hospital wing! You leave those brooms where they are or you'll be out of Hogwarts before you can say 'Quidditch'. Come on, dears."

Harry and Neville followed Madam Hooch to the hospital; Neville reached over and placed his hand on Harry's shoulder and gave him a quick squeeze of thanks as they went through the door.

Madam Pomfrey pulled her wand out and had them remove their robes so they could be checked over. Waving her wand over Neville first then Harry she sighed as she said, "You both are fine. Harry how long have you been on nutrition potions?"

"Since my birthday, my guardian and doctor ordered them for me for what my relatives did. I have one more month of them and then I'm finished," Harry replied as the doors to the hospital wing opened.

Professor McGonagall entered the hospital room and looked at the two first years being checked out by Madam Pomfrey. She peered sternly over her glasses at Harry.

"I want say well done Mister Potter. Your quick actions saved Mister Longbottom from serious harm. Well done indeed and thirty points for your heroism."

"Thank you, Ma'am," Harry replied.

Then she suddenly smiled.

"Your father would have been proud of you. He was an excellent broom flyer; he even played Quidditch for the Gryffindor's. Maybe you'll play for your house one day."

"I doubt it; I'm not here to play games. I'm here to learn," Harry stated as he pulled his robes back on.

"But..."

"No Professor, I'm serious and personally if I was to play a sport, it would be football, not flying around on a broom," he said as he stood up and asked, "Can I go back to class?"

"Class is over, so go ahead to dinner if you want," Professor McGonagall suggested.

ooOoOoo

"Having a last meal, Potter? When are you getting the train back to the Muggles?"

"You're a lot braver now you're back on the ground and you've got your little friends with you," said Harry coolly. There was of course nothing at all little about Crabbe, and Goyle, but as the High Table was full of teachers, neither of them could do more than crack their knuckles and scowl.

"I'd take you on any time on my own," said Malfoy. "Tonight, if you want. Wizard's duel. Wands only – no contact. What's the matter? Never heard of a wizard's duel before, I suppose?"

"Of course he has," said Susan and she looked at Draco, "I'm his second, who's yours?"

Malfoy looked at Crabbe and Goyle, sizing them up.

"Crabbe," he said. "Midnight all right? We'll meet you in the trophy room, that's always unlocked."

When Malfoy had gone, Susan and Harry looked at each other.

"You know he won't show up," Harry stated.

"Yup, and neither will we, but we will let Professor Sprout know, and just in case he does, he can lose the house points," Susan said with a giggle which had all the first years in the house laughing.

At the head table, Dumbledore watched as Harry and his friends confronted Draco, and if everything went as planned a confrontation

between the two should go off without a hitch tonight. He was surprised when the Hufflepuffs started laughing and he wondered what they were up to. He would have to have a meeting with Harry to get him to go into Gryffindor as soon as Ron was placed there.

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All the same, it wasn't what you'd call the perfect end to the day, Harry thought, as he lay awake much later listening to Neville falling asleep. The meeting with Professor Sprout went off without a hitch and she was in the same mind as Susan that Draco wouldn't show up, but she said that Harry and Susan had to. It was a matter of honor and she'd escort them there and back. So at ten minutes to midnight, Harry, Susan and Professor Sprout had marched through the castle to the trophy room.

At midnight, Filch showed up looking for them out of bed.

"Ahh caught them I see. It's detention for you now!" the old man cried out.

"No, it's not. Young Harry was challenged to a duel by Draco Malfoy, and it seems he has failed to show up. Angus, how did you know they would be here?" Sprout asked.

"Mister Malfoy told me they overheard some kids talking about vandalizing the trophy room at midnight. So I came as soon as I knew," Filch replied.

"Then it seems young Mister Potter was set up and so were you. I'll deal with it tomorrow," Professor Sprout suggested and then led the two children back to their dorm room.

Harry smiled as he thought of the punishment Draco and Crabbe were going to receive as he drifted off to sleep.

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Harry and the rest of the gang were sitting at the Hufflepuff table waiting for Draco and his goons to show up. At seven thirty, they walked into the great hall and came to a stop at seeing Harry and Susan sitting at their table.

Draco swaggered over and with a snide remark, "I'm surprised to see you here."

Harry casually looked over at the blond git and replied, "Oh, you finely decide to stick your nose out of your cave. Where were you last night, chicken?"

"Yes, Mister Malfoy, we waited for you and you didn't show. Why didn't you? A duel of honor was called by you and we now see that you have no honor, because you didn't show," Professor Sprout said as she came to a stop behind the boy.

Draco jumped and his face turned pink as he looked at the Herbology professor. "Ahhh..."

"I suggest fifty points from Slytherin, and detention with Filch for two weeks for all three of you. Maybe next time when you call an honor duel, you will show up!"

"My father..."

"I don't care what your father will do. This deals with you, me and my Puffs. Now go eat," Sprout ordered.

At the head table, Snape was fuming as he watched the meter for his house loose fifty points. Standing up, he flung his cloak behind him and strolled towards the head of house for Hufflepuff.

"What is the meaning of this?" he snarled.

Professor Sprout looked at Snape and replied, "Your young Slytherin challenged one of my Puffs to an honor duel and failed to show up. He set them up to be caught by Angus and we're both upset about it. So now young Mister Malfoy will have to deal with the consequences of his actions and be known as a coward until he decides to settle the honor duel. Now good day, my breakfast is waiting."

Harry watched as Snape grabbed the ear of Draco and dragged him from the hall with his two guards.

Later that day, the Puffs were in their common room talking about Draco, Snape and doing homework when Harry stood up and said,

"Fellow Puffs. I need your help. How many have you been abused by Professor Snape's teaching methods. Please raise your hand."

Hands went up into the air, and Harry smiled as Susan, Daphne, and Tracy pulled out boxes of crystal vials.

"Good, now what would you do to get rid of him?"

"Anything, what do you need?" Cedric replied.

"Your memories of his worst times with him, how he treated you, what he did, how many house points he took from you. You need to bring the memory to the forefront of your mind and place your wand against your head. Then pull it away slowly and tap one of the vials. The memory will be placed in the vial. If you have more than one good memory of what he did, ask and we'll give you more vials. When finished, these memories will be marked with your name, and sent to Susan's aunt she wants to bust his ass out of here. Because of him, Auror, Healer and many other government jobs that require NEWT level potions are going unfilled. He is crippling this country, and she wants it stopped. Will you help?"

"Damn right we will," a young woman with pink hair replied.

"Thanks, Tonks, we really need all of you on this," Susan said as she started passing out the vials.

When finished they had two hundred and nineteen memories stashed away. They planned to ask Ravenclaw and Gryffindor the next day. Harry had Cedric shrink down the three boxes and they were sent off with Susan's owl to her aunt in a sealed letter.

Chapter Six

Halloween

****UNEDITED****

ooOoOoo

When they finished gathering the memories from all the Hufflepuffs, they had two hundred and nineteen of them stashed away. They planned to ask Ravenclaw and Gryffindor the next day. Harry had Cedric shrink down the three boxes and they were sent off with Susan's owl to her aunt in a sealed letter. Letters were also sent off to former students to get their memories sent to Amelia Bones for use in the case against Professor Snape, unknowing that it would cause a chain reaction that would go back to the day that he was hired.

Harry spent the days doing his homework and trying to stay away from Professor Snape and Dumbledore along with Ron Weasley who was constantly shadowing him and Draco Malfoy and his body guards. He had heard that there had been several fights between Ron and Draco and the goon squad. Ron had taken all three boys down with his fists, but Draco won one fight with magic because Ron's wand wasn't suited for him. Before he knew it, October had rolled around and on the thirtieth, Harry spent time watching Cedric and the house team practicing and was confused by the hype on the game.

As the team landed for the evening, Harry walked over and asked, "Cedric, can I ask you a question?"

"Sure Harry, what do you need to know?"

"What is the big hype about flying around on a broom, dodging two iron balls, passing another around while another player looked for a golden ball? Football would be more fun, you would have more players than what you have here," he asked as he gestured to the shocked team.

"Well, its different then football. Yes only a few people play per team, but your house gets behind you to cheer you on while football all you do is kick a ball back in forth. It's so one dimensional while Quidditch

is three dimensional," Cedric replied and then added when he saw the confusion on Harry's face, "Look, in Quidditch you have to be watching everywhere because you don't know where the bludgers or the snitch will come out. I know, next practice, why don't we let you try a little, you might like it."

Harry stood there and thought for a second and then replied, "Ok, I guess that's only fair."

"Good, our next training day is November the 1st at 6pm, so be there," Cedric ordered as he locked the broom locker up.

"I will," Harry replied and they walked up to the castle together.

ooOoOoo

On Halloween morning they woke to the delicious smell of baking pumpkin wafting through the corridors. Even better, Professor Flitwick announced in Charms that he thought they were ready to start making objects fly, something they had all been dying to try since they'd seen him make Neville's toad zoom around the classroom. Professor Flitwick put the class into pairs to practice. Harry's partner was Daphne while Neville, was working with Hermione Granger. It was amusing when Neville's feather shot across the room and stuck to the wall when he set his wand on it.

"Now, don't forget that nice wrist movement we've been practicing!" squeaked Professor Flitwick, perched on top of his pile of books as usual. "Swish and flick, remember, swish and flick. And saying the magic words properly is very important, too – never forget Wizard Baruffio, who said 's' instead of 'f' and found himself on the floor with a buffalo on his chest."

Harry and Daphne, and the rest of the girls had their feathers flying in no time. They were zipping around each other doing loops which had the rest of the first year kids laughing.

"Oh, well done!" cried Professor Flitwick, clapping. "All of you take ten points each for your house, well done indeed."

As they filed out, the Slytherins and Gryffindor's enter the room to the two houses bickering.

"Look it's the know it all!" Ron snipped as the girls filed past him.

"Ron, the only three things you know from what I've heard is Quidditch, chess and food. Those are some might goals in life," Susan said and then added when he smiled in happiness, "NOT! Get a clue, none of those will help you in life if you are not prepared with an education."

The girls snickered as he turned as red as his hair.

The group spent the rest of the afternoon in the library studying until dinner. Daphne cast the time spell and they headed for the great hall. Harry stayed back, thinking on the death of his family.

"Harry, what's wrong?" Hermione asked.

"I hate this day," he replied with a sigh as everyone came to a stop.

"Why?" Neville asked.

"Oh how stupid could we be," Susan blurted out and then hugged Harry.

Everyone looked at Susan and Harry with confusion.

"It's the tenth anniversary of his parent's murder, how could he be happy on this day," Susan said as she released Harry.

"Oh Gods!" Hermione gasped out and pulled Harry into a hug, "I'm so sorry we didn't even think of that."

"Harry, I'm sorry too, I should have thought of it as well, I mean... because of your mom and you, he's been gone..."

"It's ok Nev, don't worry about it. Hey, how about a game of Trivia Pursuit tonight after dinner?" Harry asked as he came to a stop as a scream was heard from down the corridor.

"What the hell was that?" Susan asked.

"It came from down the hall," Harry said as he pulled his wand out and started running, the rest of the group right behind him.

The loud crash came from inside the bathroom. Pushing the door open, Harry almost pissed his pants as he looked at the back of the troll that stood over twelve feet tall. Its skin was a dull, granite grey, its great lumpy body like a boulder with its small bald head perched on top like a coconut. It had short legs thick as tree trunks with flat, horny feet. The smell coming from it was incredible. It was holding a huge wooden club, which it had raised over its head by one hand. Across the room moving under the sinks was a girl wearing Gryffindor colors. The troll swung its club and shattered another sink, causing the blond haired girl skittering back.

"That's Lavender Brown," Padma shouted.

"Daphne, freeze my water," Harry said as he pointed his wand at the Troll's feet and said, "Aguamenti," the water spell landed at the feet of the troll and spread outward as Daphne cast the freezing charm turning it to ice.

The troll swung its club again, and its feet went out from under it. It landed on the ice and bits of ice flew everywhere.

Harry pointed his wand at Lavender and shouted, "Accio Lavender Brown."

The girl flew out from under the sink, over the troll and into Harry and Neville's arms. Scrambling out of the room, Harry slammed the door and shouted, "Run!"

Everyone started running down the hall to the stairs when the door flew off its hinges behind them. The troll looked around, saw them running away and roared. Harry looked over his shoulder and saw the troll was gaining.

"Up the stairs!" Harry shouted as he grabbed Daphne's arm, "Freeze spell again."

Harry pointed his wand at the floor and cast the Aguamenti spell again and covered the passageway with it. Daphne froze the water and they ran up the stairs. The troll hit the ice and his feet flew out from under him and towards the stairs. Seconds before it was to hit the stairs, the stairs moved to another level and the troll went over the edge and plunged to the bottom of the stairwell where it hit with a loud crash.

"Is it dead?" Hermione asked as she leaned over the rail.

"I think so," Harry said as he heard sobbing. Looking to his right, he saw Lavender being held by Neville.

"Are you ok Lavender?" Harry asked.

The blond sniffed and nodded his head as he heard running and then someone shouted out and the stairs moved back to their original position. Professor Snape slid into the bottom step coming to sudden halt as his feet hit first.

"What is going on here?" Professor McGonagall asked as she slid to a stop. Behind her Quirrell slid into Snape as he was trying to get to his feet.

"Professor McGonagall, we were on the way to dinner, coming from the library when we heard a scream. We ran to see what it was and found a troll in the bathroom trying to kill Lavender. Well I used the Aquameti spell and covered the floor with water, Daphne froze the water and when the troll slipped and fell I summoned Lavender from across the room. I slammed the door closed and we took off running for the stairs. The troll came out of the bathroom and chased after us. I had everyone go up the stairs and cast the Aquameti spell again and Daphne froze it. The troll slipped and came hurling towards us and the stairs moved with us on it. The troll went over the edge and fell to the bottom of the stairwell where I think it died," Harry said as he looked over the edge again.

Professor McGonagall looked over the edge as Professor Dumbledore came up with Professor Sprout as Quirrell and Snape climbed to their feet.

"Well done Harry," Dumbledore said as he looked over the edge.

"Thank you, Sir, but without my friends here, I couldn't have done what we did. Daphne, I really need to learn that freezing spell from you," Harry said.

"I'll teach it to you if you teach me the Accio spell," she replied with a smile.

"Twenty points for each of you. Miss. Brown, why were you in the bathroom and not at dinner?" Professor McGonagall asked.

"Ron Weasley is why. I tried to help him with the levitation spell and he kept insulting me. It hurt me, and I was in there crying when the troll came in. If it wasn't for Harry and his friends, I would be dead," she said with a sniff.

"Lavender, would you like to join our study group?" Susan asked.

"Could I? I'm so alone in the Gryffindor house," she said as Neville hugged her again.

"Yes, you can," Parvati said as she gave the girl a hug as well.

"Professor, I will render down the troll for potion components, and dispose of the remains," Professor Snape suggested as he looked over the edge.

"I don't think so Professor, by the laws of 1622; all dark creatures killed are the property of the person who killed it. The corpse belongs to Harry and Daphne since they killed it," Susan said.

"What?" Harry asked in confusion.

"No it belongs to Hogwarts and I'm the potion master, so it comes to me," Snape snapped.

"I'm afraid you're wrong Severous. Mrs. Bones is correct, please render the troll down and have a list of the potion ingredients delivered to me. I will make sure they are compensated for them," Professor Dumbledore ordered and then turned to Professor McGonagall, Sprout and Flitwick and said, "Take your students back to their dorm."

They split off and followed their respected heads of houses back to their common rooms. Entering the common room, they found the feast still going so they grabbed plates and filled them with food.

The next morning, Harry was one of the first people down to the common room. Sitting down, he pulled his family Grimoire out and started reading.

July 15th 1863

My son is dead; he died at the battle of Gettysburg charging the Northern forces under General Pickett. I'm so angry at my father-in-law for forcing us to abandon our son to the muggle world because he was a squib. I swear I will never speak to Andrew and Annette Potter ever again. Even Fredrick agrees with me. We're taking our belongings and moving back to England. Fredrick has gone to pick up Andrew at the orphanage where we left him and we're taking him with us. I will not leave another son to die in this country that's being torn apart by war. Even if he is a squib, Andrew will have a better life in England. I have sent letters off to the most prestige muggle schools for him, he will have the best education that we can afforded.

The house elves have taken our trunks to the docks and we'll follow in a few hours. It's a two week journey home to England. The elves have also found Richard's body and had it shrunk down to bury in the family plot outside of London. Fredrick has been offered a position in the ministry under the Sports and Games division. I have agreed to stay home and raise Laura and James until they can go to Hogwarts in two years.

Fredrick is home, I will make the next entry on the ship. Good bye America, you cruel country.

Sofia Louise Potter (Nee Greengrass)

"Morning Harry. What are your reading?" Susan asked as she dropped down beside him.

"The family history, did you know I'm related to the Greengrass'?" Harry asked as he closed the book.

"Wouldn't surprise me, most of the ancient and noble houses are," she replied as she leaned back and put her feet up on the stool and stretched her arms over her head with a loud yawn.

"Did you get the letter ready for your aunt? I'm sure she'll want to know why a troll was in the school," Hannah said as she came downstairs and reached over the couch to tickle Susan.

Susan flew off the couch and glared at her best friend who giggles as she wiggled her fingers, "Such a tempting target there Susie!"

"You brat, you know I'm ticklish," Susan huffed as she sat back down.

"Morning," Neville said as he came down the stairs scratching his head.

"Morning Neville," the girls said.

Behind Neville came Ernie Macmillan, Justin Finch-Fletchley, and Wayne Hopkins.

"Morning guys, hi Megan, you all ready to eat?" Harry asked as he put his book away.

"You bet, I'm starved," Neville said as they headed for the exit from the common room.

ooOoOoo

As they entered November, the weather turned very cold. The mountains around the school became icy grey and the lake like chilled steel. Every morning the ground was covered in frost. Hagrid could be seen from the upstairs windows, defrosting broomsticks on the Quidditch pitch, bundled up in a long moleskin overcoat, rabbit-fur gloves and enormous beaver skin boots.

The Quidditch season had begun, and Cedric had Harry down on the pitch trying out as reserve seeker for the house. Once Harry had gotten up in the air, he found that he did like the game, but couldn't see making it a career like Cedric was planning.

On Saturday the second, the first official game would be played between Gryffindor and Slytherin. Gryffindor won, and they moved up into second place in the House Championship.

Cedric had Harry sitting beside them. Each had a pair of omnioculars that could record two hours of game play. Cedric wanted Harry to have some experience with the game and recording it would do so.

Cedric had also loaned his copy of Quidditch through the Ages, to him with orders to study the rules of the game.

Harry learnt that there were seven hundred ways of committing a Quidditch foul and that all of them had happened during a World Cup match in 1473; that Seekers were usually the smallest and fastest players and that most serious Quidditch accidents seemed to happen to them; that although people rarely died playing Quidditch, referees had been known to vanish and turn up months later in the Sahara Desert.

Harry and the gang enjoyed their first game, they sat and drank hot chocolate and ate scones delivered by the house elves as they watched the Gryffindor's plow the Slytherins under.

The day before Hufflepuffs first Quidditch match the group was out in the freezing courtyard during break talking about classes. Hermione and Daphne had conjured them up bright blue fireballs which could be carried around in jam jars. They were standing with their backs to them, getting warm, when Snape crossed the yard. Harry noticed at once that Snape was limping. Harry, and the group stood there huddled together to keep warm and block the fire from view; they were sure it wouldn't be allowed. Unfortunately, something about their guilty faces must have caught Snape's eye. He limped over. He hadn't seen the fire, but he seemed to be looking for a reason to tell them off anyway.

"What's that you've got there, Potter?"

It was Quidditch through the Ages. Harry showed him.

"Library books are not to be taken outside the school," said Snape. "Give it to me. Five points from Hufflepuff."

"Sir, this is not a library book. Cedric loaned it to me, and taking points for it, is wrong," Harry replied angrily as Snape took the book.

Snape looked at the book and jammed it back into Harry's chest, "Ten points for loitering," he snarled as he limped away.

"Wonder what's wrong with his leg?" Harry asked.

"Dunno, but I hope it's really hurting him," said Neville bitterly.

"Yeah, I hope so too, the greasy git," Lavender said as she wrapped her hands around her jar.

ooOoOoo

Harry, looked at the paper inviting them all to Hagrid's for tea again. Passing it around, they agreed to go. So at three pm on Friday the twenty-second, the eleven of them tromped down to Hagrid's hut.

Hagrid passed out tea and rock cakes to everyone and then sat in his large chair.

"So how's classes for all of you?" he asked.

Harry took a sip of his tea and replied, "Brilliant. I love magic."

"Told you, you're a wizard," Hagrid laughed and then told everyone how they had met which had the rest of the laughing.

"Hagrid, I found out something about Professor Snape" he told Hagrid. "Did you know he tried to get past that three-headed dog at Halloween? I heard it bit him from one of the other students. We think he was trying to steal whatever it's guarding, like a certain package you picked up the day we met,"

Hagrid dropped the teapot.

"How do you know about Fluffy?" he asked.

"Fluffy?"

"Yeah – he's mine – bought him off a Greek chappie I met in the pub las' year – I lent him to Dumbledore to guard the –"

"Yes?" said Harry eagerly.

"Now, don't ask me any more," Hagrid replied gruffly. "That's top secret, that is."

"But Snape's trying to steal it."

"Rubbish," said Hagrid again. "Snape's a Hogwarts teacher; he'd do nothin' of the sort."

"So why does Snape hate Harry so much?" Hermione asked.

"You're wrong, Professor Snape doesn't hate Harry," Hagrid replied.

"You're wrong. He takes points from Harry for just breathing. That man hates Harry with a passion and it started the first day in class. I believe he is after what every you brought back," Susan snapped as she set her cup down.

"I'm tellin' yeh, yer wrong!" said Hagrid hotly. "I don' know why you insist that he hates Harry, he is a fair but firm teacher. Now, listen to me, all of yeh – yer meddlin' in things that don' concern yeh. It's dangerous. You forget that dog, an' you forget what it's guardin', that's between Professor Dumbledore an' Nicolas Flamel –"

"Aha!" said Harry. "So there's someone called Nicolas Flamel involved, is there?"

Hagrid looked furious with himself.

"Get back to the castle," he snapped as he stood up.

Harry led his friends back to the castle and to the class room they use to meet in.

Chapter Seven

Christmas

This is Unedited

ooOoOoo

Christmas was coming. One morning in mid-December, Hogwarts woke to find itself covered in several feet of snow. The lake froze solid and the Weasley twins were punished for bewitching several snowballs so that they followed Quirrell around, bouncing off the back of his turban. The few owls that managed to battle their way through the stormy sky to deliver post had to be nursed back to health by Hagrid before they could fly off again.

No one could wait for the holidays to start. While the Hufflepuff common room and the Great Hall had roaring fires, the draughty corridors had become icy and a bitter wind rattled the windows in the classrooms.

"I do feel so sorry," said Draco Malfoy, one morning before they headed out to potion class, "for all those people who have to stay at Hogwarts for Christmas because they're not wanted at home."

He was looking over at Harry as he spoke. Crabbe and Goyle chuckled. Harry heard it all as he was waiting on Neville to repack his bag that had tipped over at breakfast. Malfoy had been even more unpleasant than usual since the Quidditch match where the Gryffindor's had slaughtered the Slytherins.

Once Neville joined them, they headed for class, as they walked past Draco, Harry said, "Well Draco, that's where you're wrong. I'm going home to my family, too. We plan on have a large party with many guests, which won't include wanabe death nibblers like you and your family."

"My father..."

"What is it with you and your father? Do you share the same bed? I mean you hang around those two buddies of yours like there your bed companions. At least I have ten beautiful ladies to talk with,

shesh what do you have? Two guys, man you need help," Harry said as they left the Great Hall and headed for Potions.

The worst class was Professor Snape's classes down in the dungeons, where their breath rose in a mist before them and they kept as close as possible to their hot cauldrons. After a brutal class which both houses lost points, they left the dungeon and they found a large fir tree blocking the corridor ahead. Two enormous feet sticking out at the bottom and a loud puffing sound told them that Hagrid was behind it.

"Hi, Hagrid, want any help?" Neville asked, sticking his head through the branches.

"Nah, I'm all right, thanks, Neville."

"Would you mind moving out of the way?" came Malfoy's cold drawl from behind them. "Or are you looking for a tree to stroke since you're a squib, or make a bed to lie in next to mummy dearest."

Neville dived at Malfoy just as Snape came up the stairs.

"LONGBOTTOM!"

Neville let go of the front of Malfoy's robes.

"He was provoked, Professor Snape," said Hagrid, sticking his huge hairy face out from behind the tree. "Malfoy was being an insultin' ponce."

"Be that as it may, fighting is against Hogwarts rules, Hagrid," said Snape silkily. "Five points from Hufflepuff, Longbottom, and be grateful it isn't more. Move along, all of you."

Malfoy, Crabbe and Goyle pushed roughly past the tree, scattering needles everywhere and smirking.

"I'll get him," said Neville, grinding his teeth at Malfoy's back, "one of these days, I'll get him... I'll get both of them."

"Don't worry, Snape will be taken care of soon," Harry whispered and then said "and then it will then just be Malfoy."

"Come on, cheer up, it's nearly Christmas," said Hagrid. "Tell yeh what, come with me an' see the Great Hall, looks a treat."

So Harry, Neville and the girls followed Hagrid and his tree off to the Great Hall, where Professor McGonagall and Professor Flitwick were busy with the Christmas decorations.

"Ah, Hagrid, the last tree – put it in the far corner, would you?"

The Hall looked spectacular. Festoons of holly and mistletoe hung all around the walls and no fewer than twelve towering Christmas trees stood around the room, some sparkling with tiny icicles, some glittering with hundreds of candles.

"How many days you got left until yer holidays?" Hagrid asked.

"Just one, we all leave tomorrow at nine am," said Hermione. "And that reminds me – Harry, Neville, we've got half an hour before lunch, we should be in the library."

"Oh yeah, you're right," Neville said as he tore his eyes away from Professor Flitwick, who had golden bubbles blossoming out of his wand and was trailing them over the branches of the new tree.

"The library?" said Hagrid, following them out of the Hall. "Just before the holidays? Bit keen, aren't yeh?"

"Oh, we're not working," Harry told him brightly. "Ever since you mentioned Nicolas Flamel we've been trying to find out who he is."

"You what?" Hagrid looked shocked. "Listen here – I've told yeh – drop it. It's nothin' to you what that dog's guardin'."

"We just want to know who Nicolas Flamel is, that's all," Hermione said as she leaned against the wall.

"Unless you'd like to tell us and save us the trouble?" Harry added. "We must've been through hundreds of books already and we still can't find him anywhere – just give us a hint – I know I've read his name somewhere."

"I'm sayin' nothin'," Hagrid replied flatly.

"Just have to find out for ourselves, then," Daphne said, and they left Hagrid looking disgruntled and hurried off to the library.

They had indeed been searching books for Flamel's name ever since Hagrid had let it slip, because how else were they going to find out what Snape was trying to steal? The trouble was, it was very hard to know where to begin, not knowing what Flamel might have done to get himself into a book. He wasn't in Great Wizards of the Twentieth Century, or Notable Magical Names of Our Time; he was missing, too, from Important Modern Magical Discoveries, and A Study of Recent Developments in Wizardry. And then, of course, there was the sheer size of the library; tens of thousands of books; thousands of shelves; hundreds of narrow rows.

Hermione took out a list of subjects and titles she had decided to search while Susan strode off down a row of books and started pulling them off the shelves at random. Harry wandered over to the Restricted Section. He had been wondering for a while if Flamel wasn't somewhere in there. Unfortunately, you needed a specially signed note from one of the teachers to look in any of the restricted books and he knew he'd never get one. These were the books containing powerful Dark Magic never taught at Hogwarts and only read by older students studying advanced Defence Against the Dark Arts.

"What are you looking for, boy?"

"Afternoon Madam Pince, I was wondering if you knew who Nicolas Flamel was," Harry asked.

Madam Pince the librarian brandished a feather duster at him and smiled, "I remember the name, but you know. I cannot for the dickens remember where," she replied and then saw the crestfallen look and said, "If I remember, I'll let you know. Now go and check the normal books. I will check the restricted ones. If it's not dangerous, I'll let you know who he was."

Harry smiled and replied, "Thank you, Madam Pince."

"You're welcome, now off to lunch with you all," she said.

They went off to lunch.

"You will keep looking while I'm away, won't you?" said Hermione.
"And send me an owl if you find anything."

"We will, and you're coming over for Boxing Day, right?" Susan asked.

"Wouldn't miss it for anything," Hermione said with a smile.

Harry started for the door with the girls and slowed. Standing by the open door was Professor Dumbledore saying goodbye to the students. Picking up speed, he started walking next to Tracy and Neville as they reached the doors.

"Mister Potter, a word please," Albus said.

Everyone came to a stop and Harry looked at the headmaster, "Sir, what may I do for you?"

"I was wondering where you were going?" he asked.

"Home for the holidays, I'll see you when we get back in January," Harry replied.

"Strange, your aunt didn't say you were coming," he said as his eyes twinkled.

"What would my aunt have to do where about I'm staying?" Harry asked.

"She is your guardian..."

"Maybe she is, but I have authorization to spend my holidays where I want. Now good day, Sir," Harry said and started walking.

"I'm afraid I cannot allow you to leave," Dumbledore replied as he stepped in front of the boy.

"Sir, my boyfriend is staying at my house for Christmas. Now unless you wish to deal with my aunt, I expect you to move, please," Susan replied.

"Your house? Boyfriend?" Dumbledore said in shock as he looked at the niece of the DMLE.

"Yes, Sir, and we really need to go if we're going to catch the train," Susan replied as she took Harry's arm and they started walking.

None of them saw the look of anger on Dumbledore's face as his pawn walked away.

Harry looked back and saw Dumbledore going back into the castle, turning back to Susan he asked, "Boyfriend?"

Susan blushed and replied with a smile, "Well it's true. You're a boy and a friend."

"True," Harry said and opened the carriage door and helped Susan, and the girls in to the carriage. He climbed in and sat down and then Tracy sat on his lap as the carriage gave a lurch and started moving.

They reached the train and quickly found a compartment for themselves. Harry closed the door and sat down beside Susan and Tracy. The rest of the girls spread out and relaxed as the train gave a lurch.

"So you're all coming over for Boxing day?" Harry asked.

"We'll be there," the twins replied.

"Same here," Daphne said and looked at Hannah and asked, "What about you Hannah?"

"Of course, I'm spending Christmas with Susan and Harry. My parents will be in Japan for a meeting with the Japanese ministry. What about you Hermione?" she asked.

"I'll be there. I assume we will be trading gifts then?" Hermione asked as she looked up from the book she was reading.

"Of course, wait till you ladies see what I got all of you... I just hope you like them," Harry replied.

"Harry, you know we will. It's too bad Neville didn't come with us," Tracy said as she leaned against Harry and closed her eyes.

"Yes, it is. I tried to get him to see if he could stay with us, but his grandmother wouldn't allow it," Harry replied and then looked at Tracy, and said with a chuckle, "Seems like I'm a pillow today."

Tracy slapped Harry's arm and ordered, "Stop moving. I'm comfortable."

Everyone laughed when Susan followed Tracy's example and leaned against Harry.

Harry sighed and closed his eyes as the two girls drifted off. Several hours later, he woke up when someone tried to open the door. Looking around, he saw everyone was sleeping and leaned back and closed his eyes.

"We will be pulling into Kings Cross station in ten minutes, please make sure everything you brought with you is secure... and thank you for riding the Hogwarts express," came through the intercom waking everyone in the compartment up.

Harry stepped out of the compartment and went to the bathroom to change. Just as he finished changing the train slowed and he headed back to the compartment to grab his bag.

Harry stepped out of the coach and helped all the girls down. Looking around, he saw Aunt Amelia talking to two other women. One he recognized as Hannah's mother. The other was unknown.

"I'll see you on boxing day. Now don't forget to do your homework," Hermione said as she rushed towards the exit from the platform.

"We won't. Have a happy Christmas," Daphne shouted back as Hannah grabbed her arm.

Harry watched as the twins walked over to a woman who looked like an older version of them. They hugged her and then vanished as they apparated away.

"Ready to go?" Amelia asked as she lifted her cane up and said, "Portus."

With a nod, Harry, Susan, and Hannah touched the cane along with Hannah's mother. The feeling of a hook in their navels and the world

started spinning. They arrived in the parlor of Bone manor and they quickly separated to go to their rooms to put their bags away. Dinner was served at eight and by ten, they were in bed sleeping.

ooOoOoo

Harry yawned and stretched as sunlight filled the room. Sitting up, he scratched his head and then picked up his wand and wand holder. Attaching it to his arm, he went to the dresser and pulled out the days clothes before heading into his bathroom.

He was pulling his pajama shirt over his head when his pants were pulled out and something cold and wet was dropped in. Screaming in fright, Harry started pulling his pajama bottoms off, when he was spanked flattening the cold substance across his behind. He yanked his pants and his underwear down to get rid of the large snowball. Harry heard giggling and then a door slammed as Hannah and Susan took off running.

"I'M GOING TO KILL YOU BOTH!" Harry shouted as he dug the snow out of his arse cheeks.

Getting the last of the snow out he flicked it into the bathtub as he looked at the door and smiled, "You know girls; revenge is a dish best served cold."

Harry quickly took a shower and headed downstairs to the main dining room where Hannah, Susan, Amelia and Hannah's mum were sitting at the table eating.

"Good morning Harry. How did you sleep?" Amelia asked as she held out her arms.

Harry took the hug before replying, "I slept ok. Seems strange not to hear Neville snoring but was peaceful," he said as he sat down across from Hannah.

"That's good to know. I remember when you first came here. You had dreadful nightmares and you wouldn't even let Amelia or Susan hug you. Now you do. So how has class been?" Juliet Abbot asked.

Harry blushed and smiled as he started filling his plate with eggs, bacon, and toast, "Thank you Mrs. Abbot, classes have been fantastic," he replied.

"You're welcome. So what are your plans today?" Amelia asked.

"We want to go into Diagon Alley and do some Christmas shopping if that is ok," Susan asked.

"I will have John Salvage take you. Now remember, do what he says," Amelia ordered.

"We will," Hannah replied.

"Thanks Aunt Amelia," Harry said between bites of his food.

"Welcome. Now all of you be on your best behavior. Harry, you have your key for your vault, but don't go overboard. No more than two gifts per person... ok?" Amelia ordered.

"Ok," Harry replied as he picked up his glass of milk.

Two hours later they were wandering through Diagon Alley. Susan and Hannah ran into Madam Malkin's Robe shop while Harry went to Obscurus Books.

Harry walked around the dark shop looking at all the books. Finding several books for himself including one called 'Ancient Potions of Roman Times, by Lucia Agricola' he slipped it into his basket. He found several books for Susan, Hannah, Daphne and Tracy right away. After thirty minutes he found one titled, 'Pureblood families of India, by Horace James Canning' and that one went into his basket as well as one on the English Pureblood Families of the eighteen hundreds. Carrying the basket to the counter, he set it down and grabbed a new one. He went back to looking and found one book titled 'Muggleborn and their contribution to the Magical world, by Jason Black,' which went into the new basket. For Neville, he found one on Herbology that was written by Hannibal Jonas called 'Herbs, Plants, Trees and why we need them.'

In a back section of the book store, Harry found five books that he put in his basket for his library. They were titled History of the noble and ancient House of Black by Orion Black, History of the noble and

ancient House of Greengrass by Elizabeth Greengrass, History of the noble and ancient House of Potter by Jason Potter the third, History of the noble and ancient House of Abbot by Camille Abbot, and the last was History of the noble and ancient House of Bones by Edgar Bones.

"Cool, these will look good in the library, wish there were more," Harry stated as he looked at more titles and found one called 'Defense, Escape, or Run by Alastor Moody.' He headed back to the counter and paid for his book.

"Could you shrink them for me?" Harry asked.

"Yes, Sir, no problem," the woman replied and shrunk the three stacks of books down to the size of a matchbook.

Gathering up his up the packages, he slipped them into his pocket and headed out of the store and across to the stationary store where he bought more parchment and quills for class. He also bought some calligraphy pens for each of his friends and had their initials monogrammed on them. Each pen had ten extra nibs as well. He found a pair of gold pens for Aunt Amelia to use at home and work. He had them engraved with her name as well. Heading back to Florean Fortescue's Ice Cream Parlour and ordered hot chocolate to drink and started reading the London Times.

Harry opened the movie listings and found out that Terminator 2: Judgment Day was playing and circled the times that they were playing as the girls and guards joined them.

"All done Harry?" Susan asked as the guards brought them hot chocolate.

"Yes I am. Hey want to see a movie?" he asked.

"What do you want to see?" Hannah replied as she took a sip of her hot chocolate.

"Terminator 2: Judgment Day is playing. Want to see it?" he said as he took a large drink of his cocoa.

"What's it about?" Susan asked.

"It's about golems that come from the future trying to kill a hero who has to defeat them to save his mother," Harry said.

"Sounds interesting. Like you are a hero to the wizard world," Hannah replied.

"Exactly," Harry said with a grin.

"Sounds like a plan," Susan said as she looked at Hannah.

Neither girl noticed the tilting of Harry's left eyebrow as he set his plan in motion.

They headed to the theater, and the auror escort paid for the movie tickets. Once inside, Harry grabbed each of them a coke and he purchased a large popcorn for them to share.

Harry sat between the girls with the popcorn in his lap. As they munched on the popcorn the lights dimmed and the movie started with a road runner cartoon. He listened to the girls giggle at the cartoon and then the movie started. They jumped when the first android morphed from a silver mass and killed the policeman. Later when the evil android jumped into the helicopter and killed the pilot they screamed as Harry poked them in their sides.

Both slapped Harry when he laughed and said, "Got yeah!"

The girls turned and swatted Harry. Susan hit Harry on his left arm, while Hannah nailed him on his right and part of his chest.

"You brat! You did that on purpose. How did you know about that man doing that?" Hannah asked.

"Read the book," Harry replied with a smirk.

Both girls huffed and turned back to the movie. When it was finished, they left the theater and headed home to Bones Manor via the Leaky Cauldron.

Coming out of the floo, they saw Aunt Amelia sitting in one of the den chairs reading.

"Good evening children, how was your day?" she asked as she kissed Susan's cheek.

"Brilliant! We did our shopping and went and saw a movie." Harry replied and the girls quickly followed suit.

"Which he scared the dickens out of us in the middle of it. It seems Harry had read the book," Susan huffed and walked over and kissed her aunt.

"Ahh young love," Amelia replied with a smirk, and then said to Harry, "Mister Potter, should I draw up a betrothal agreement between the houses of Bones, Abbot and Potter?"

"WHAT!" Harry blurted out as he turned bright red and stammered, "No ma'am, were just friends."

Hannah and Susan giggled and kissed Harry on his cheeks which caused him to turn more red as the blush slid down his neck.

Amelia started chuckling and then smiled. Pulling Harry to her, she gave him a hug and was glad for once that he didn't flinch at the contact. "You're a good lad, Harry. Don't ever change," she said as she released him.

"Now off to bed all of you, and tomorrow, I want your homework finished," she ordered.

"Yes, Ma'am," the three kids replied and ran upstairs to their rooms.

ooOoOoo

Over the next several days the finished up their homework and were going through the Bones library. Amelia walked in to the library to find the kids surrounded by stacks of books.

"By the goddess! What is going on here?" she asked.

"We're trying to find out who Nicolas Flamel is," Susan replied.

Amelia rubbed her chin as she stood there thinking and then said, "I believe you want to look in the Alchemy section, and old alchemist for that. Why do you need to know who he is?"

"At the beginning of the term, Professor Dumbledore warned anyone not to go into the third-floor corridor on the right-hand side was out of bounds to everyone who did not wish to die a very painful death. We also found out from some of the Gryffindors, that it's guarded by a Cerberus..."

"WHAT!" Amelia said in a loud voice.

"Found it!" Susan stated as she looked up from the book in her lap, and then read the page out, "The ancient study of alchemy is concerned with making the Philosopher's Stone, a legendary substance with astonishing powers. The Stone will transform any metal into pure gold. It also produces the Elixir of Life, which will make the drinker immortal.

"There have been many reports of the Philosopher's Stone over the centuries, but the only Stone currently in existence belongs to Mr. Nicolas Flamel, the noted alchemist and opera-lover. Mr. Flamel, who celebrated his six hundred and sixty-fifth birthday, last year, enjoys a quiet life in Devon with his wife, Perenelle (six hundred and fifty-eight)."

"That would be awesome to own, and that must be what the Cerberus is guarding," Harry stated.

"Why the hell is Nicolas Flamel's stone at Hogwarts? Why the hell is a dangerous and controlled animal there?" Amelia asked.

"We don't know, but for some reason Dumbledore thinks it's safer there and he may be right. The vault it was stored in at Gringotts was broken into the same day that Hagrid retrieved it..."

"And how do you know this Harry?"

"Because the day he took me to get my supplies. Hagrid removed an object from the same vault and Hagrid likes to talk," Harry stated.

"Well that's something I will deal with when we arrest Snape on the third of January. Now I don't want you to worry about it. Did you get all your gifts wrapped?"

"You're really going to arrest that greasy git?" Harry asked.

"Yes we did," Hannah replied as she pointed to the Christmas tree.

"Yes, we have over three thousand charges against him. Plus he will be charged for endangering the wizard world because several jobs require NEWT level potion scores, like aurors, healers and potion masters. He has endangered all of England because of his attitude," Amelia replied as she sat down.

"Wow, I didn't know you needed to have high scores to be an Auror," Harry replied and hung his head.

"Why the sad face," Susan asked.

"My dad was an auror and I wanted to be like him. But I suck at potions," Harry replied.

"You suck, because Snape makes you screw up by standing behind you and Neville when you're working and it makes you nervous," Hannah stated as she closed her potions book.

"True and how he docks points from all the houses but Slytherin. He even took points from me for breathing too loud," Harry replied with a sigh.

"Well if all goes as planned, he won't be around for much longer," Amelia said as she stretched and stood up. "I'm off for a shower before dinner. After dinner, we'll go to the danger room and I'll let you practice your spell work if you eat all your vegetables."

"Brilliant," Harry said as Susan and Hannah nodded their heads.

"Go get cleaned up and we'll eat dinner," Amelia said and headed for the door.

The kids scattered for their bedrooms to clean up and then ate dinner. After dinner, they spent several hours practicing their spells and Amelia taught them several household charms so they could clean easier. With the house being unplottable and heavily warded the ministry was unaware that they were using magic.

ooOoOoo

Christmas morning rolled around and Harry was lying in bed sleeping when his door was flung open and two excitable preteens landed on the bed screaming.

"WAKE UP! IT'S CHRISTMAS!"

Harry sat up in shock as Susan and Hannah bounced on his bed. Before he could say anything, Susan kissed Harry on his mouth and then Hannah did. The girls giggled as Harry eyes went wide and then he blushed.

"What? Huh? What's going on?" he asked with a glazed look in his eyes.

"Sue, I think we broke him," Hannah said with a giggle and then kissed Harry again.

Harry rolled Hannah onto her back and yanked the front of her t-shirt up. Looking down at her bare belly and belly button he lowered his mouth to it and blew a raspberry into it. Hannah started squirming and giggling as he continued to blow and she started slapping his back.

"STOP!" she screamed as she tried to get free.

Susan was laughing so hard she fell off the bed and landed on her butt and back with her feet on the bed.

Harry released Hannah and grabbed Susan's bare feet and started tickling them. Susan's back arched as she tried to get free and she screamed out.

"STOP I GIVE! I'M GOING TO PEE!" she shirked.

Harry watched as Susan started squirming and trying to pull her feet away. He let her go and slid out of bed as Hannah and Susan tried to catch their breaths.

"You prat!" Susan said as she climbed to her feet.

Harry laughed as he walked to his dresser and pulled out some clean clothes. "Yes, but you two love me anyways," Harry stated as he opened the bathroom door and went inside.

Hannah sat on the bed in shock at his words. She didn't realize that Susan had passed out and fell backwards onto the bed as her mouth opened and closed on its own.

Harry started singing as the shower came on and Susan cringed on his off key notes. "He needs singing lessons," she said.

"No doubt. He may have dreamy eyes, but oh man... Come on, I cannot listen to that... ouch is he killing a cat in there?" Hannah asked.

The two girls left to wake up Aunt Amelia while Harry finished his shower.

ooOoOoo

Harry started passing out the gifts to Susan, Hanna and Aunt Amelia as soon as they sat down with their juice.

"Thank you Harry, and Happy Christmas," Amelia said as she took the box from her ward.

"You're welcome Aunt Amelia, and I hope you like it," Harry replied as he sat down with his first gift he had every gotten for Christmas.

Amelia opened the small box and smiled at the two calligraphy pens, "Thank you, Harry. Their beautiful," she said as she looked over at the boy and dropped the pens when she saw him crying.

Amelia was out of her chair and across the room before she knew she'd moved. Sitting beside him, she asked, "What's wrong Harry?" as she hugged him.

Harry sniffed and looked up at Amelia, "I've never had a Christmas gift," he said as he wiped his eyes.

"Oh Harry!" Susan and Hanna cried out together and ran across the room to join in the hug.

The hug broke apart and they finished opening their gifts. Harry received several books from the girls on potions and history of magic as well as a large book on the History of the Potters. From

Amelia, she received a picture frame that had his father's Auror badge and identification in it. From one of Amelia's guards he received a pair of horntail boots and vest and the other guard gave him a small book on Auror defense spells. Harry, Susan and Hanna each received a new broom from Amelia, a Nimbus 2000 as well as a broom cleaning kit.

"Kids, those brooms are meant to be used in emergency. As you know, since I am head of the DMLE, I am a target. Just in case we are attacked and anti-escape wards are up. You're to use those brooms to get the hell out of this house. All three of you know where to go if we're attacked. Understand?" Amelia asked.

"Yes, Ma'am. We're to fly to the edge of the property and enter the shed that's under the Fidelius charm," Susan said as she hugged her aunt.

"Correct, now do you see the silver band in the middle?" she asked and when the kids nodded she continued, "You touch your wand to that's spot and it activates an invisibility spell that will turn you and your broom invisible. Remember this kids, you three and the rest of your classmates are the war generation and there are people out there that will want to hurt you. Especially you Harry and you know why."

"We understand," Susan replied.

"Good lets go eat, and then we'll go outside," Amelia ordered as she stood up, "are you ready for tomorrow?" she asked as they entered the dining room where Lipsy was serving breakfast.

Edited By

Question for all of you. Should I have Amelia remove the stone or let Dumbledore talk her in leaving it there? Please leave feedback and remember this is unedited due to my editors being off line at this time. Also some parts of Hagrid and Harry's conversation is taken from the first book, but i did change parts and added to them.

Chapter Eight

Hogwarts, Memories,

& Boxing Day

ooOoOoo

Christmas Day

Professor Minerva McGonagall was troubled as she sat at her desk and remembered back many years to a conversation she had with a young James Potter in his sixth year. Looking at her fellow head of house Professor Pomona Sprout she sighed as she told her about the conversation.

"Professor, I need your help," James said as he dropped in the chair across from his head of house.

"What is it Mister Potter?" she replied as she set her teacup down.

"I received a package from my father and it scares the hell out of me..."

"What was in the package?"

"My father sent me the Heir's ring to the House of Potter and..." James said as he ran his fingers through his hair.

"Is there something wrong with the ring?"

"Yes, as you know I love Lily, but if I put the ring on. It will make me find the best wife possible. Once the ring finds the right wife for me, it will force a bond between us. It could force me to fall in love with you or Professor Sprout if you met the right requirements ..."

"You make it seem like the ring is alive," Minerva stated.

"I think it is. What should I do?" James asked as he looked back up at his head of house.

"Did your father tell you to put the ring on?"

"No..."

"Then if you love Lily Even like you say. Then I'd suggest you don't put it on... Stay with who you love, and ignore it," she suggested.

"Thank you Professor. I'll do as you suggested," James said as he stood up and left the room.

"Do you think Harry is in danger from this ring?" Pomona asked,

"I don't think so. From what James told me, the ring just gathers a list of who could be a suitable mate and then bonds them together. James told me it won't kick in until Harry takes his head of House ring, and that's six years away. So we will just have to watch out for him," Minerva said as she leaned back in her chair.

"I... ok, but will you tell him about the ring?"

"Not now. Maybe later, I don't want to ruin his friendship with his friends. I just hope the ring's not influencing it," Minerva stated.

"I agree. Well I have some plants to replant, and they're not getting done by themselves," Pomona said as she stood up.

"And I have papers to grade. See you at dinner," Minerva stated.

Pomona started walking to the door and stopped and turned around, "Min."

"Yes, Pomona?"

"When its time, let me tell Harry. He is in my house, and I think he will trust me to tell the truth to him," she said.

Minerva looked at her oldest friend and slowly nodded her head, "As you wish. If he has any questions that you cannot answer, please send him my way."

"I will, see you later," she said as she opened the door and left the room.

ooOoOoo

In an unused classroom deep in the dungeon, Professor Quirrell knelt as he drew the last of fifty runes on the floor.

"Hurry up you fool. We don't have much time."

"I'm hurrying master, I must get the rune right or we won't learn anything from the scrying," Quirrell replied as he finished etching the last of the runes. He then pulled a crystal ball from his pocket and enlarged it until it was six feet around and placed it in the center of the circle of runes. Using his magic, he tapped the ball and cast the spell to activate the runes and the orb floated up into the air.

Pointing his wand at the ball, he said, "Ostendo sum totus tertius solum*."

Quirrell watched as the ball started filling with smoke and an image started to appear in the ball. The image showed the Cerberus sleeping on the trap door. The image started to change as the door behind him opened.

"Look I know I saw Professor Quirrell come this way, and he... Bloody hell what is that?" Wayne Hanson gasped out as he came to a stop.

"What's wrong?" Regina Jones asked as she bumped into her friend, she looked around him and saw the face on the back of Quirrell's head and screamed.

Quirrell spun around and said, "Imperio! Imperio!" behind him the crystal ball fell to the floor and shattered into a billion pieces.

Wayne Hanson never had a chance as the unforgivable hit him. The second spell flew past his shoulder and hit Regina as she tried to turn away.

"Who are they?" Voldemort demanded.

"A pair of muggleborns," Quirrell replied.

"Dispose of them. Be creative."

"As you command master," Quirrell replied as he walked over to the two kids and looked at them, "Both of you are to write a note saying

you love each other and are running away to be together. You are then to go to closet which holds the school brooms. You will then mount the brooms and fly north. You are to go as high as you can and continue flying. Once you see the ocean, you are to continue to travel out over it until you are several hours from the coast. You will then land in the ocean. Do you understand your orders?"

"Yes, Master," came the reply from the two kids.

"Good, if anyone tries to stop you. You are to kill them with these knives," Quirrell ordered as he conjured two razor sharp knives.

Quirrell watched as the two fifth year students took the knives and left.

"Quirrell, good job," Voldemort said.

"Thank you Master, but what about the scrying? Should I cast it again?" Quirrell asked as he reentered the room to clean up the mess from the broken crystal ball.

"Fool unless you have another ball that's been prepared then we cannot cast the spell again," Voldemort ordered as Quirrell finished cleaning the room.

ooOoOoo

Boxing Day

Harry sat on the couch reading a science fiction book he had picked up called 'Mutineers' Moon' by David Weber, an American author. It had come out in October while he was at Hogwarts, and one of the Aurors that guarded Amelia recommended it when they were in London shopping for gifts. He was enjoying the story when the floo chimed and he looked up in time to see Daphne Greengrass come out of the fireplace followed by Tracy Davis carrying a bag each.

"Hi Harry," Daphne said as she came over and sat down in one of the couches while Tracy snatched some cookies from the tray.

Harry placed a bookmark in his book and set the book down on the coffee table. "Hi Daphne, Tracy, how was your Christmas?"

"Wonderful, we spent the day in Paris for breakfast and lunch. Dinner was spent at the meadows," Daphne replied as she picked up the book and asked, "What's this?"

"Sounds like you had a great time. That's a book from an American author. It's about the moon being a giant spaceship sent from another world. It's really good."

"Hi girls, would you like something to drink?" Amelia asked as she came into the room with Hannah and Susan.

"Pumpkin juice will be fine," Tracy said as the floo turned green and the Patil twin's came out along with Lavender Brown.

"Hi everyone!" Padma said as she hugged Tracy and snatched a cookie from her.

Harry stood up and walked over and hugged his friends. "Happy Christmas everyone," he said as the floo flared and Hermione stumbled out.

"Hello everyone, Neville is right behind me. I ran into him at the Leaky Cauldron..."

The flaring of the floo and Neville came out and landed on his face with a loud groan.

"Owe," he said as Harry helped his friend up.

"Hello Mister Longbottom, how is your grandmother?" Amelia asked as she cast the cleaning spell on the twins.

"Hi everyone, Happy Christmas, She is fine and wishes that everyone had a happy Christmas," Neville said as he brushed the ashes off from the floo.

"Good, now I have snacks prepared for you. The sleds are all ready for the hill behind the house if you all want to go sledding or you can sit in here and talk or play games. It's all up to you. I have to go into the office for a few hours, but should be back by noon. Lipsy is in charge of all of you so you better behave. Or else!"

"We will Auntie," Susan said as the rest of the group replied, "Yes, Mrs. Bones."

"Thank you. Harry, watch over them. You're the man of the manor," Amelia said as she kissed everyone on their foreheads.

Harry watched as Neville turned bright red from the kiss and snickered.

"Let's trade gifts," Susan suggested and went to the tree and started pulling the remaining gifts out.

Harry, Susan and Hannah passed their gifts out to their friends and opened the ones handed to them. Every one of them got a book and something useful for Hogwarts like the calligraphy pens or in the case of Harry and Neville they both received models of Dragons from Daphne. Harry's was a Horntail while Neville's was a Welsh Green.

"Brilliant," Harry said as he looked at the cover of the box, "Thank you, Daphne."

"You're welcome Harry. There is also a box for each of you containing glue, paint, and paintbrushes. When you finish them, let me know, I want to see what they look like," Daphne said as she opened her last present.

"We will," Neville replied as he flipped the box over and started reading the back cover, "Harry, there are fourteen other dragons in the set."

"Really?" Harry replied as he turned the box over, "Wicked. Plus they give a ton of information on them that will be useful in class."

Daphne giggled and said, "Yes they will. Now did everyone get their homework done?"

"Of course," Hermione replied as she opened her gift and gasped out, "Oh thank you Harry," she said as she hugged the book to her chest.

Everyone read the title of the book and several of them giggled,

Daphne's left eyebrow went up and she said, "Muggleborn and their contribution to the Magical world, by Jason Black. That will probably be outdated by about one hundred years."

"Doesn't matter to me. It's about muggleborns and that's all that matters. Where did you find it Harry?" Hermione asked.

"I found a used book store tucked into a side alley off Diagon Alley. In fact, all the books I got for you came from the same store. I even bought a bunch for my library that I didn't have..."

"What library?" Hermione asked excitedly.

Everyone laughed and Harry grinned, "My trunk has a special compartment with hundreds of books in it... oh we found out who Flamel is."

"Who is it?" Hermione asked.

"He is an alchemist who created the sorcerer's stone or the philosopher stone as it called. It can create gold out of lead and makes an elixir called the elixir of life, which can slow down your aging process. Mr. Flamel is almost seven hundred years old because of it..."

Susan interrupted Harry, "The question is. Why is it at the school being hidden because it would be best if hidden under the Fidelius Charm? That way no one could ever find it but the secret keeper. Even Aunt Amelia agrees with that plan. She is wondering what Dumbledore is up too."

"He wants Harry to go after it. It's the only reason I can think of. It's a test for Harry to be under Dumbledore's control," Hermione blurted out.

"I agree, Harry we cannot allow this. You're ours, and ours alone to manipulate," Daphne said with a smirk.

"I..." Harry gasped out as his mouth opened and closed.

"I think we broke him," Tracy said with a whisper that caused everyone else to snicker.

The girls then started telling Harry their plans for him. Harry sat there, completely gob smacked, while across the country, Amelia was about to knock on a door when it opened.

ooOoOoo

Nicolas Flamel Home

Somewhere in the South of France

Amelia appeared at the edge of the wards that surrounded the Flamel home with a small crack. Check her robes and monocle she started walking up the path to the house. As she neared the door it opened and a house elf was looking at her.

"May I help you?" the elf asked.

"Amelia Bones, head of the British DMLE to see Nicolas Flamel and Perenelle if they are not too busy," Amelia replied.

"Please come in Mrs. Bones and follow me to the drawing room," the elf said and opened the door wider to allow her in.

Amelia stepped in and handed her cloak to another elf and then followed the first elf to the drawing room. The room had several bookcases, a large fireplace and three couches in front of the fireplace. The furniture was quite old but in excellent condition.

"Please have a seat and I shall notify the master and mistress you're here to see them," the elf said as he slid the door closed.

"Thank you," Amelia replied as she sat down and waited for Flamel to appear. She was thinking about what she had learned and it still left her with many questions. Opening her notebook, she looked at the notes and was flipping the page for the fifth time when the doors opened.

"Hello, I heard you wish to speak with me?" Nicolas asked as he stepped into the room.

"Mister Flamel, I have one question for you..." seeing the nod to continue, she asked, "What the hell are you thinking of by hiding your stone in a school filled with children?"

"What? Albus said he had a perfect hiding place, he never said it was the school. I'll kill him," Nicolas ranted as he sat down.

"So you had no idea that he was hiding the stone there," Amelia said as the elf appeared and set a tray down on the coffee table.

"No I didn't. Picker, I need a glass of fire whiskey. Please bring me a glass," Flamel ordered.

"Yes Master," the elf replied and vanished.

Amelia spent the next two hours talking with Nicolas and Perenelle. When she left they had a plan formed to deal with the stone. Appariting home, she could hear screaming coming from the back of the house as she walked to the kitchen and looked out at the snow-covered hill.

"Lipsy, make sure all the bathrooms are ready. They are going to need to clean up for dinner and provide them with clean clothes to wear as well. What is for dinner? It smells heavenly," Amelia said to the elf as she sniffed.

"Yes, Mistress. Dinner will be ready in about forty minutes. I have made several lamb roasts, glazed with an orange mint sauce. The vegetable dish is fresh snow peas and baby onions, and small roasted red potatoes. For desert we have a black forest gateau and French vanilla ice cream," Lipsy replied.

"Damn, you're making me hungry. I'll be outside," Amelia said as she walked out the back door.

ooOoOoo

Harry hung onto the sled rope and screamed in pleasure as he slid down the hill, behind him, Daphne hung on tightly as they hit the small hill and flew up into the air. They landed with a thud and snow flew everywhere as they came barreling down the hill where Auror Roberts stood waiting for them.

As they flew past the Auror, he pointed his wand at the sled and it started slowing down till it came to a stop next the patio.

"Ok, kids, time to get cleaned up and into dry clothes. Lipsy says dinner will be ready in forty minutes," Amelia said using the Sonorus spell.

"Ah man, we're having a blast," Harry replied as he stood up and helped Daphne to stand. He brushed the snow out of her long black hair and off her shoulders.

Giggling, Daphne nodded, "Thank you, Harry," she said with a smile.

"I know, but you go back to school in a few days and we don't need you all sick. So come on and let's get you out of those wet clothes and into something dry. Auror Roberts can you put the sleds in the shed for them?"

"Yes, Ma'am," the red headed auror replied as he pointed his wand at the ten sleds and levitated them up into the air.

Harry, Susan and Hannah led their friends into the manor and upstairs to the bedrooms. Each of them paired off and used the bathrooms and changed into dry clothes after a quick shower. Thirty minutes later, they were sitting down at the large table when the food was brought out.

After dinner, they played games until ten and were shown to their bedrooms again to change into their nightclothes. After a last cup of hot cocoa, they crashed for the night. Neville slept in Harry's room on a conjured bed while all the girls bedded down in the study on mattresses shoved together where they talked about Harry and Neville.

By midnight, they were asleep and unaware at Hogwarts a mass search was underway for two missing students.

ooOoOoo

Harry stretched and yawned as he woke up. Looking over at his best friend he giggled as he looked at Neville. He was sound asleep with his head hanging over the edge of the bed, his mouth was open wide. Grabbing a piece of parchment, he tore it into strips and balled them up. Sitting up, he started tossing them at his friend. On the fifth toss, the ball of parchment dropped right into Neville's mouth.

Neville coughed and shook his head as he rolled over and started coughing harder until the wet ball of paper flew out of his mouth. Looking at his friend laughing he snapped, "Harry that wasn't nice!"

"I know, but it was funny. Come on, let's get up and ready for the day," Harry replied as he slid out of bed and grabbed some clean clothes to wear.

Neville grumbled and followed suit. After a quick shower each, they headed downstairs to catch Aunt Amelia sitting at the table sipping coffee.

"Good morning you two, you're up early," Amelia said with a smile as Harry gave her a hug.

"Hungry," Harry stated as he slid into his seat.

Several plates appeared with waffles for the two boys and they dug in to the stacks as the first of the girls came wandering in.

"WAFFLES!" Daphne shouted and ran for the table.

Amelia stood and kissed each of the kids on their foreheads before picking up her briefcase. "I want you all to behave, and stay out of trouble. Finish your homework if you haven't finished it and..." Amelia stopped talking as her badge started vibrating on her chest. Tapping it she said, "Have to run. Something has come up at work."

"Bye!" came the multiple replies as Amelia ran to the fireplace and vanished into the green flames after tossing in the floo powder.

The kids spent the rest of the day doing their homework and at dinnertime Amelia hadn't appeared they went into the library to play games. At nine, Lipsy popped in and sent them all to bed. Over the next six days, they saw very little of Amelia as she was working on a case and couldn't tell the kids what it was. The morning of the second found all of them standing on the platform hugging their parent's goodbye to head back to school. They claimed their compartment and spent the day reading and talking as the train barreled north to Hogwarts.

The express came to a stop at six pm and the kids exited the train and headed up to the castle for the welcome back feast. Harry led

Neville, Susan and Hannah over to their table and sat down while the rest of their friends took the spot at the Ravenclaw table near them so they could whisper back and forth.

Dumbledore stood up and looked out at the smiling children, tapping his glass, he said, "Welcome back. I hope you all have a fantastic vacation and hope you all received what you wanted for Christmas. Alas, all I wanted was socks and didn't receive any," the kids chuckled as he continued talking, "You can never have enough socks. Now let's eat. Tuck in!"

The food appeared and the kids started eating as the conversation picked up among the students and staff. The biggest conversation was about two fifth years that were missing and that Ronald Weasley had been almost bitten in half by the Cerberus when he tried to get into the third corridor.

Harry was eating his slice of roast when he felt a brush against his mind. Locking down his Occlumency barriers, he slammed the probe away as he looked at the staff table and saw Dumbledore jerk back. With a small smile, he turned back to his meal.

When the food was finished, Dumbledore stood up and said, "Now off to bed."

Harry walked with his friends to the Hufflepuff quarters and said good night to his friends. Neville and he walked into their room to find their luggage on their beds. Putting it aside, Harry found a package on his pillow.

"Wonder what this is?" Harry said as he picked it up.

Neville looked over and saw Harry holding a package. "Open it and find out," Neville suggested as he set his models on his desk.

Harry tore the package open and a shining, silvery cloth off the floor. It was strange to the touch, like water woven into material.

"Wow! I have seen one of those. My dad had one he used for work. It's an invisibility cloak. Who sent it?" Neville said in awe.

"I don't know," Harry replied as he laid it aside and picked up the wrapper and a note fell out. Picking it up, he read the paper.

Your father left this in my possession before he died.

It is time it was returned to you.

Use it well.

A Very Merry Christmas to you.

There was no signature. Harry stared at the note. Neville sat on the edge of his bed thinking. Looking at the cloak and then his friend, he said, "Harry."

"Hmm?" Harry replied as he looked at the paper.

"Harry, I think you're being set up to use it for the third corridor."

"I think so too, so it's going into my trunk. Maybe I'll use it for a run to the kitchen, but wandering the castle would be dangerous," Harry stated as he put the cloak into his trunk and pulled out his pajamas.

Both boys changed as the fireplace lit up and the torches dimmed as they climbed into bed.

"Night," they said at the same time and laughed. Soon both boys were asleep while across the castle, one man sat sitting at his desk fuming as he listened to the conversation from a certain room he had placed listening charms in.

"Damn it! He needs to investigate the corridor. How else is he supposed to be guided to his destiny? It's for the greater good that he does what I want," Dumbledore said as he opened a new bag of lemon drops and popped one into his mouth. Turning he looked at Fawkes and said, "At least I was able to get that Weasley kid out of the Slytherin dorms and into Gryffindor like he was supposed to be. Now all I need to do is get the rest of the kids where they are supposed to be."

Fawkes turned around on his perch, dug his beak under his wing and went to sleep.

Chp9